

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 290
September
2019**

**"The Perfect Ending is the
end of humanity. The world
would be better off without
us."**



CASSELS

Environmental catastrophe,
narcissism and protest pop with
Chippy's poetic punk cynics

Also in this issue:

TRUCKFEST & SUPERNORMAL reviewed
Introducing **KNOBBLEHEAD**
BOSSAPHONIK hits 15

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews
and five pages of local gigs for September

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THE BULLINGDON

SEPTEMBER 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Sunday 1st September Jen Berkova José Kelly Ella McMurray & DJ Doors: 7pm	Friday 13th September Break Stuff Slipknot vs SOAD Doors: 10pm	Sunday 29th September The Pale White Doors: 7pm	Saturday 19th October Ritual Union: Teleman The Comet is Coming + Much More Doors: 7pm
Wednesday 4th September Childcare Doors: 7pm	Saturday 14th September Moving in Party Doors: 10pm	Monday 30th September Sam Outlaw Doors: 7pm	Thursday 24th October The Della Grants Doors: 7pm
Thursday 5th September Rob Togoni Hells Gazelles Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 17th September Ferris & Sylvester Sam Johnson Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 1st October Hunkpapa Doors: 7pm	Thursday 24th October Bassface: 24hr Garage Girls & Eva Lazarus Shosh + Lady Ice Eva Lazarus (PA Set) Effi Brooks Doors: 10pm
Friday 6th September Master of None Lovelace Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 18th September Fishes @ The Bullingdon Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 2nd October Plastic Mermaids Doors: 7pm	Friday 25th October Dreadzone Doors: 7pm
Friday 6th September Pitch Black Katlusha Rortingah John Swede Doors: 10pm	Thursday 19th September Centerline Sprung from Cages Number 38 Outer Blue Doors: 7pm	Thursday 3rd October Cassels The Saint Pierre Snake Invasion Doors: 7pm	Friday 25th October Straight Outta Cowley Doors: 10pm
Saturday 7th September Ox-Skool Breaks #1 Pete Cannon Sunny & Deck Hussy Side FX B2B Beeno Bustin B2B Skampy Lowercase B2B Paul Bradley Alk-E-D B2B Deluxe Doors: 10pm	Friday 20th September The Leisure Society Benedict Benjamin Doors: 7pm	Friday 4th October Drum and Bass Doors: 10pm	Saturday 26th October Volume #17 BCEE Phibes, Diddz, Lyfie, Mac, Sound Affect Traumatik, Alman, Tanz Doors: 10pm
Saturday 7th September Heriot Grief Ritual 13 Burning The Hope Burden Doors: 7pm	Friday 20th September The Haus Party Doors: 10pm	Saturday 5th October Skylarkin Soundsystem Mungos HiFi Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 30th October Robert Vincent Doors: 7pm
Wednesday 13th September Skinny Molly Doors: 7pm	Saturday 21st September Musical Medicine Jimmy Rouge Doors: 10pm	Thursday 10th October David Ford Abe Partridge Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 30th October Haute Mess Doors: 10pm
Thursday 12th September McLusky* Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 25th September Sean Webster Band Doors: 7pm	Friday 11th October Ibiza 90s Party Doors: 10pm	Thursday 31st October Jesca Hoop Doors: 7pm
Friday 13th September Thunderstruck AC/DC Tribute Doors: 7pm	Friday 27th September Oxphward: Animals Doors: 7pm	Saturday 12th October Pip Blom Doors: 7pm	Thursday 31st October Graving Trippy Halloween Special Doors: 10pm
	Friday 27th September Soul Sista Doors: 10pm	Friday 11th October The Wurzels Doors: 7pm	Friday 1st November Rawdio 5th Birthday Arkaik, Saxxon, Mistik, MC Bassman Doors: 10pm
	Saturday 28th September K-Funkz Serial Killaz Doors: 10pm	Friday 18th October Simple: Midland Doors: 10pm	

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU

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DAY OF THE DEADBEATS

release a new EP this month. The country-soul stars launch 'Bring Out Your Deadbeats', featuring recent singles 'Paint a Picture' and 'Muddy Creek', with a headline show at The Port Mahon on Saturday 14th September, with support from The August List. Tickets are £5.

Next month the band will celebrate their tenth Day of the Deadbeats event with a free show at Tap Social in Botley on Friday, featuring The Deadbeats alongside The Long Insiders and The Ragged Charms.

SMASH DISCO

bow out with one final show this month. The pioneering live music night is calling it a day after six years of attracting hardcore and punk acts from around the world to Oxford, mostly at The Library, with an emphasis on showcasing diverse acts, particularly female, queer and non-white musicians. Most Smash Disco shows were free or on a pay-what-you-can basis, despite regularly attracting international bands.

The last show features a headline set from Glasgow's **Gimp World**, featuring former members of Anxiety, at **The Library** on **Sunday 1st September**, with support from Basic Dicks, Livid, Cowley Chainsaws and Misery Guts.

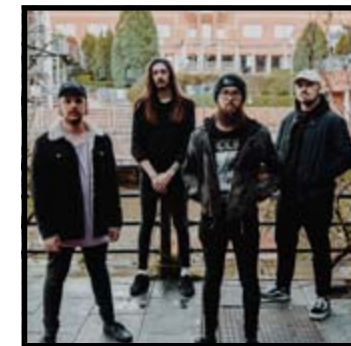
Smash Disco organiser Oli Hower is moving to Canada for a year and with co-promoter Stephen Tuohy having moved to Sheffield last year, they decided to put the night to rest, at least for the foreseeable future.

Talking to *Nightshift*, Oli said: "I'm been so proud of what we've done and the bands we've had down here: Haram, Frau, Uranium Club, Nachthexen, Q, No Problem, Perspex Flesh, Fatamorgana... impossible to name a favourite. And I'd never have thought we'd put on 74 shows; I thought I'd have quit way sooner. But I'm glad that I can look back and know that we put on those incredible punk and hardcore bands in our home town.

"I think we've made a mark. We wanted to do it and just make it like it's a normal thing, rather than an extraordinary thing or resorting to tokenism, to have more diverse line ups, because that's the way it should be. We've learned ourselves as we've gone along and got better at it too. Still work to be done though."

LITTLE BROTHER ELI launch their 'Live In Oxford' album with a screening of the video footage of their 2018 show at the O2 Academy that became the album. The screening takes place at **Modern Art Oxford** on **Wednesday 4th September**, with an intimate acoustic set from the band planned for an undisclosed venue after the screening, and physical copies of the album on sale.

Recent *Nightshift* cover stars Little Brother Eli recently headlined Glofest in Florence Park as well as appearing at Cornbury, Wilderness and Big Feastival over the summer. Tickets for the screening, priced £8, are available at [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk).



MSRY are back with a new EP later this year. 'Loss' is released on the 8th November, the band's first release since last year's 'Safety First' EP, which earned rave reviews in *Kerrang!* and *Metal Hammer* and earned them a place in *The Guardian's* Best New Music list for 2019 alongside Slowthai and Yonaka.

The local metalcore heroes precede the release with a new single and video, 'Still Breaks My Heart', this month, featuring a guest vocal appearance from Cancer Bats' Liam Cormier. Talking about the new song, singer Kial Churcher said: "We played with the idea of obsession and people being too gone in it to realise what was happening around them and there



BOSSAPHONIK celebrates its 15th birthday this month with a special show from **Pat Thomas & Kwashibu Area Band**.

The world jazz dance club night marks its decade and a half anniversary at **The Isis Farmhouse** at Iffley Lock on **Saturday 28th September** and Bossaphonik founder and host **Dan Ofer** talked to *Nightshift* about his club's unique place on the Oxford music scene.

"In the early 2000's I was first exposed to the UK jazz dance scene. I started visiting the venues representing music I loved, such as Camden's Jazz Cafe, Gilles Peterson's night at Bar Rumba and Brighton's Jazz Rooms. Inspired, I was itching to DJ in this spirit at a regular event in Oxford and I soon joined The Cellar. Realising the potential to also host live music, Bossaphonik started in late 2004. I felt blessed to suddenly be in a dream role, representing the music I love in my hometown."

Bossaphonik rapidly became one of Oxford's favourite club nights, mixing live acts from around the world alongside classic and new releases, played by Dan in his role as resident DJ, and he remembers some of his favourite nights.

"15 years on, well over 100 different live acts have come to town. The Bossa crowd have experienced consistent highs from the likes of Bengali-Cuban funk act Lokkhi Terra; theatrical brass honk-step from Edinburgh's Orkestra Del Sol; explosive jazz-fusion from Birmingham's Sugar Beats; the wonderfully inventive jazz-hip hop of Bussetti; afrobeat from Fela Kuti band member Dele Sosimi and Latin funk boogaloo from Manteca, to name a few."

Bossaphonik has outlived its influences and most other club nights in Oxford, as well as its long-time home at The Cellar, which closed earlier this year, prompting a move to East Oxford Community Centre and nights at The Bullingdon and Dan is excited to be able to celebrate a landmark anniversary.

"15 year runs of jazz-world clubs are not in abundance, so it feels fitting to mark the occasion by inviting a Ghanaian international legend to town. Pat Thomas and Kwashibu Area Band are the modern day leaders of Ghanaian highlife music. There's a 50 year career behind the now-72 year old known as 'the golden voice of Africa'. His collaborations include with afrobeat drummer pioneer Tony Allen and highlife icon Ebo Taylor. In this new band highlife is played in a modern killer live show; their Womad 2015 performance was my top experience of African music from a band at the very pinnacle of the region's sounds."

Support on the night comes from local reggae, blues and funk fusion band Papa Nui. Find out more about Bossaphonik at [facebook.com/bossaphonik](https://www.facebook.com/bossaphonik)

being people who want to break through that barrier for them. The idea of social media being an all consuming entity is a very real and happening thing right now; the fact people are obsessed with their presentation on social media, the extent people go to for likes and to gain a following on them is mind

blowing and can consume your entire being, vision and thought process. I think it shows in the video that we're trying to break through to that person who can't see what's around them, and it becomes harder and harder as it goes on in the video to help them see that there's more out there than their obsession."



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NEWS

THE EPSTEIN launch a new monthly residency at **The Port Mahon** this month. Make This Our Home, named after a track on their most recent album, 'Burn the Branches', takes place on the first Friday of each month, beginning on the 6th September and will see the band collaborate with guests and friends from the Oxfordshire folk and Americana scene. The first show features a guest set from Crandle. Entry is £5. More details at facebook.com/epsteinband.

BBC BROADCASTER "WHISPERING" BOB HARRIS is opening the doors of his Apple Tree Studio in Steventon to Oxfordshire's emerging artists looking to record an acoustic Under The Appletree Tree Session for his YouTube channel, WhisperingBobTV. The legendary DJ's producer son Miles is also available for recording duties at the studio, from first demos to full albums. For all details, visit www.undertheappletree.co.uk.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford** **Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream or download as a podcast at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

OXFORD GIGBOT provides a regular local gig listing update on Twitter (@oxgigbot), bringing you new gigs as soon as they go live. They also provide a free weekly listings email. Just contact oxgigbot@datasalon.com to join.



THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND will release 'Victoria', their long awaited third studio album, on 7th March 2020. The culmination of six years' work, the Oxford-based group have described the LP as "a love letter to the X90 bus service," citing Victoria as "a point of arrival and departure for people from the city of Oxford." The release is timed to coincide with the birthday of the band's musical inspiration, Nat Gonella. The longstanding local jazz and jump blues band, who first made their name on the local scene with a legendary headline set at The Oxford Punt in 2009, have spent much of the past few years playing regularly in London's West End jazz clubs, but speaking to *Nightshift* about the album, frontman Stuart Macbeth explained, "'Victoria' is

very much about wanting to come home. To the Oxford of The Wheatsheaf, and Rose Hill, and Barton, Wolvercote, Headley Way – to what's left of Oxford. 'Victoria' is meant to be a pair with 'Party Seven', our last LP, which is set in rural Oxfordshire. The journey took us longer than we expected but we are all far more superb musicians than we were six years past, when that came out." 'Party Seven' catapulted the band to Number One in the UK Blues charts. The new album features eleven songs, penned by MacBeth, with arrangements both by him and tenor saxophonist "Red" Wilkins, renowned as one of the best professional saxophone players in the UK. "Red's musicianship show how far we've travelled from where we started," Macbeth says, "and we take it station by station. Next stop, of course, is Victoria."



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Cassels



“LOZ HAS FINISHED UNI and he’s just started a new job picking the music for *Love Island*. I shit you not.”

JIM BECK IS BRINGING *Nightshift* up to date on what he and brother Loz have been up to since we last had their band Cassels on the cover. Working on *Love Island* isn’t exactly what we imagined given the duo’s musically militant output over the years.

“There’s a lot more to my job than Jim’s letting on,” adds Loz quickly; “I won’t bore you with the details, but now that *Love Island*’s finished I’m not unemployed.”

IT’S EXACTLY TWO YEARS since Chipping Norton siblings Jim and Loz last graced the cover, having just released their album ‘Epithet’; this month they release its follow-up, ‘The Perfect Ending’ on Big Scary Monsters. The new album is their best yet: uptight, pin-sharp noise-pop and angular mathsy rocking punctuated with blasts of squalling guitar noise and run through by Jim’s wordy, cynical *Sprechgesang*, which this time round finds him taking aim at environmental catastrophe and social media narcissism.

The album title puts a positive spin on humanity’s self-inflicted demise, envisioning plantlife taking over, Gaia’s natural balance restored. Along the way you’ll find neat skewerings of people’s hypocritical squeamishness about consuming

animals, as well as materialism, petty mundanity and the dopamine hit-chasing obsession with online attention seeking and approval. It’s a deeply, brilliantly cynical record as we’ve come to expect from a band whose smalltown upbringing in a misunderstood corner of Oxfordshire has shaped an outlook that mixes up the contradictions of (fading) hope for humanity and outright misanthropy. Six years after the young teenage brothers played their first ever gig, it sounds like their most complete work to date.

“Yeah we’re so happy with it,” says Jim, the elder brother and very much the mouthpiece of Cassels both on and off stage, Loz remaining by far the quieter of the pair. “Everything we’ve released previous to now has had little things which niggle at us when we listen back, but with this one we made sure we spent more time getting the sounds and performances right and still really enjoy listening to it.

“This was the first time we’ve recorded an album in one chunk instead of a few separate visits to the studio, which definitely helped. The recording process itself was fairly fractious at times, though. We did it with our good friend Martin Ruffin in a studio in Hastings where we slept on the floor and basically lived the entire time. Given we were essentially living in three windowless rooms on an industrial estate, by the end we’d all gone a bit crazy.

“I’m glad you mention it sounds

more cohesive and complete. As a group of songs I think the whole thing ties together a lot better. A big part of that was down to the way Martin mixed and recorded it. For example, there’s only one take of guitar – going through three amps – on every track, instead of things being doubled up with extra takes. I had the idea for the second half – i.e. the ‘we’re all fucking doomed environmental odyssey’ – a while ago, and what we’ve ended up with sounds pretty much exactly the same as what I had in my head, which is very rare.”

AS ALREADY MENTIONED, ‘The Perfect Ending’ is a deeply cynical record; it offers no solutions to oncoming catastrophe and various social ills. Such cynicism has always been an integral part of Cassels’ music and outlook and it’s something that only seems to have deepened. Songs on the new album like ‘A Snowflake in Winter’ and ‘The Queue at the Chemists’ suggest Jim is frustrated not just by the wider world but himself in failing to do what’s needed to help stop climate crisis. Does he have any confidence in humanity’s ability or willingness to get us out of this mess?

“Totally. I hope it’s clear that I’m criticising myself just as much as anyone else in these songs. There’s no way I’m doing enough to meaningfully address the issues I’m singing about, which maybe makes me a complete hypocrite. I mean,

I’ve been a vegetarian for years, and am slowly trying to move towards veganism, but that’s cancelled out by all of the travelling I do, most of which is band-related. Rest assured the irony of burning fossil fuels so I can drive or fly to cities and festivals and sing songs about how the environment is fucked isn’t lost on me. I guess the only thing which stops me from completely loathing myself is I’m at least aware of it, and I’m also aware that I’m doing more than most people. But in reality it’s not enough.

“And that’s the crux of the issue; I’ve now become so accustomed to a life of relative luxury which is completely unsustainable, that I’m reluctant to give up. This is true of almost every person living in developed/post-industrial nations. So without meaningful legislative intervention, which I can’t see happening given the lobbying power of the fossil fuel giants, it seems fairly obvious to me that we’re all fucked. This album isn’t an attempt to get people to change necessarily, it’s just a reflection of what I see happening around me. In fact, ‘The Perfect Ending’ I’m referring to is the end of humanity. All the evidence indicates the world and the myriad organisms who inhabit it would be better off without us. So by all means carry on the way you are, I’d just recommend not having children.”

IN AN AGE OF DEMAGOGUES like Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro et al, does Jim think there is a feeling of powerlessness, even hopelessness, among progressively-minded people? JIM: “I guess so yeah. I’m not going to sit here and try and speak for all ‘progressively-minded people’, but I’d agree there’s probably a sense of disempowerment among young, politically engaged people. However, I still think this is greatly outweighed by the apathy of the disengaged. I’d say more young people are still not interested in politics or many of the major issues affecting society, unless those issues affect them directly or are related to one of the identities they chose to affix to themselves.

“There are plenty of legitimate reasons for people of any age to be disengaged with the political establishment at the moment but I have to say I think narcissism and identity politics are increasingly playing a big part. I think the paradox of social media – a technology invented to bring us closer together – is that it has actually resulted in a

more divided society populated by more self-absorbed people. Our sense of community has been eroded, as has our empathy for those who share views which are antithetical to our own. This is what ‘All The St John’s Wort In The World’ is kind of about, only in relation to mental health.”

THE STAND-OUT TRACK from ‘The Perfect Ending’ is ‘The Leaking Ark’, a potent dissection of animal exploitation through the filter of anthropomorphised cartoon names, from Bambi to Kermit. “It’s funny people have reacted in that way to that song; it was intended to be pretty tongue in cheek and sort of lighthearted. I guess it just goes to show you can never control the way things are received. The lyrics for me were a bit of fun, an exercise in seeing if I could stretch out a silly concept inspired by people refusing to eat venison on *Come Dine With Me* because it reminded them too much of Bambi. Who is a cartoon. But hey, if it convinces some people to stop eating so much meat, brilliant!”

“I’m veggie, Loz is pescatarian, but apparently the positive impact you have from being vegan for one year is wiped out as soon as you take one international flight. So no, we’re still all fucked. Also I don’t think it’s realistic to expect everyone to completely cut out all animal products. A piece of research recently found if everyone reduced their meat intake to two nights a week that would make a big difference, which feels achievable. So hopefully more and more people do that and we might be able to delay the inevitable for a bit longer.” And what of more direct activism? Have Cassels taken part in any of the Extinction Rebellion events? “Nah. I thought about it, but then my girlfriend nearly got arrested for stopping to have a look while she was on her lunch break, so self-preservation and the desire not to lose my job prevented me. I hope that movement can make a difference, but it feels like the media and public opinion are generally against them at the moment, so I’m not sure. I’d say Greta Thunburg and David Attenborough have probably achieved more thus far.”

DESPITE CASSELS’ political commentary and social observations, Jim remains sceptical of ‘protest’ music, the idea that a song can change the world being unrealistically idealistic or optimistic. “I don’t think writing a song is necessarily the most effective way to address a problem and make real change happen. I think all art can ever really hope to do is hold a mirror to something; it’s then up to the audience to engage with the reflection. More often than not I think there’s an echo chamber effect

with protest music; inevitably you end up singing to the choir.” There are bands, like Idles and Shame raising their voices; do you feel an affinity with any other acts coming through? “Not particularly. In all honesty we’ve always felt pretty separate from any scene and what other bands and artists are doing. Cassels has always been pretty insular and introspective, and I think that’s part of what makes us unique and interesting.” Bands like Idles and Shame have been keen to avoid the ‘punk’ tag, as have you. Does the word carry a particular baggage or are you just trying to avoid the pigeonholing that comes with any genre name? “I don’t necessarily have a problem with being called ‘punk’, I’m just aware any genre-label will colour people’s perception of us before they’ve even heard our music. It used to bother me more, now I just find it funny. By this point we’ve been called pretty much every guitar-

“All art can ever really hope to do is hold a mirror to something; it’s then up to the audience to engage with the reflection.”

based sub-genre under the sun. My personal favourite was a review which referred to us as ‘shambolic indie-prog’.”

SOMETHING THAT definitely removes Cassels’ from easy categorising as a punk band is the clarity of the vocals, and thus their lyrics. It’s long been a trademark but the new album marks an even starker contrast between Jim’s vocals – a double portion of words crammed into each line – and the outbursts of guitar scree and rhythmic pummelling that punctuates and surrounds them. Is it important that what he’s got to say doesn’t get lost amid the noise?

“I guess so. It’s not a conscious thing, but on reflection I suppose you’re right; most of the singing/talking tends to happen in the quiet bits. I definitely want people to clearly hear what I’m saying, as I generally spend quite a lot of time on the lyrics. That’s probably one of the reasons I also sing in my normal voice as opposed to an affected pseudo-trans-Atlantic accent. The other being it sounds fucking stupid and fake.”

And yet there is some serious noise on the new record; the second half of ‘Melting Butter’ for example. Is there a point when you’re writing songs that you think ‘words aren’t enough, we just need to explode with rage’? “Well that song is our first fully-instrumental track, which for me also illustrates how much we’ve grown in confidence as musicians. When I

started writing that song I was going to try and squeeze some lyrics in, but after a while I realised what we were playing was interesting enough by itself. That one was probably our most collaborative composition to date as well. Not having lyrics pinning things down definitely freed us up to let loose and explore dynamics more fully. “On the point about expressing rage: sure, that’s why I write songs instead of doing spoken word. Music adds an obvious layer of emotional impact which can help enforce and elevate the words of any song. Also, I’m really shit at screaming and shouting, so sometimes have to make do with a bit of heavy guitar.”

ON CASSEL’S PREVIOUS album, ‘Epithet’, and in fact on much of their earlier music, the main source of rage came from the brothers’ upbringing in Chipping Norton: dysfunctional childhoods in a quietly dysfunctional town. With Jim and Loz having now left Chippy

behind, have those demons been exorcised, or does that past still fuel their fire? “Not so much anymore; I think we addressed a lot of those traumas and the subsequent anger in a lot of our early songs, so to carry on dredging up painful past experiences now would feel unnecessary and disingenuous. We’ve stopped playing ‘Cool Box’ live, for example. After a while it just felt like we were dining out on a bad experience and forcing ourselves to relive the shittiest parts of our childhood for people’s entertainment.

“Saying that, I am becoming increasingly aware that all of my current hang-ups, worldviews, and obsessions all stem from my childhood. Which I guess didn’t really come as a big surprise. But that’s one of the interesting things about doing a lot of creative writing: after a while you start to notice recurring themes and ideas popping up again and again. As a process for developing a greater sense of self-awareness I’d highly recommend it, it’s a lot cheaper than therapy.”

Bad memories aside, the pair retain an affection for Oxford’s music scene which first nurtured them and they’re looking forward, albeit with some trepidation, to playing their biggest Oxford headline show yet when they return to The Bullingdon in October, the venue where they supported Art Brut earlier this year. They’re also enthusiastic about the latest crop of bands emerging from the city. “We’re anxious that no one will

come,” admits Jim, “but excited. I’m sure it’ll be good. If you’re reading this, please come along. We promise you’ll get your money’s worth and we’ll be suitably entertaining. “We’ve always been blown away by the response we get here. By the time this band had properly got going I’d already moved to London, Loz was still in Chippy but it’s not like he was bringing loads of mates along to every show, so seeing people who neither of us know turn up to gigs has been amazing. I have no idea if we’ve retained that local following. I hope so. “We’re still relatively in touch with the local scene; we keep an eye on BBC Introducing In Oxford. Big shout out to Dave and Liz actually, they’ve also been very supportive, as has *Nightshift* – thank you very much indeed. Fancy Dress Party, Worry, Self Help and Pet Sematary are some names which come to mind. They’re all great.”

ASSUMING THE APOCALYPSE doesn’t happen within the next month or so (“I don’t think there will be a big-bang-nuclear-apocalypse; it’ll more likely be a slow process of climate-related mass extinction. Large swathes of the world will become uninhabitable, which will lead to huge climate migration, which may well lead to more warfare and genocide, all of which will ultimately end in starvation and death by dehydration once all of the planet’s natural resources run out,” posits Jim cheerfully) ‘The Perfect Ending’ should have elevated Cassels to the next level on its release and their homecoming at The Bullingdon will be a sold out affair – a chance to acquaint or reacquaint yourself with one of the most musically intense and intelligent local acts of recent times. Before then, if Cassels were given the chance to pass one thing into law to make the world a better place, what would it be?

JIM: “Higher taxation on fossil fuels, thought I’d better keep it on-brand with the album.”

LOZ: “A fair, democratic karaoke system whereby everybody gets a turn. Why does that dickhead June get five turns a night at karaoke night down my local? Fucking ridiculous.” And if end-times climate catastrophe all feels a bit heavy, there’ll always be another series of *Love Island* around the corner. Has Loz started writing the music for it yet?

JIM: “No need: our song ‘Hating Is Easy’ will work perfectly.” LOZ: “Sorry Jim, I’ve already chosen ‘I Cum Blood’ by Cannibal Corpse. I felt it was more suited to the ‘vibe’ of the show.”

‘The Prefect Ending’ is released on Big Scary Monsters on the 6th September. Cassels play The Bullingdon on Thursday 3rd October.

RELEASED

JUNK WHALE

‘Junk Whale’

(Self released)

Of all the bands emerging from the mix’n’match muso pool of Oxford’s lo-fi/DIY scene Junk Whale are currently getting the most love and this full debut album goes some way to showing why. Made up of members of Worry, Basic Dicks, Bloodhorse, Spank Hair, Jeff and, we imagine, a few others, the quartet have a melodic edge some of the others either struggle to achieve or consciously consider superfluous.

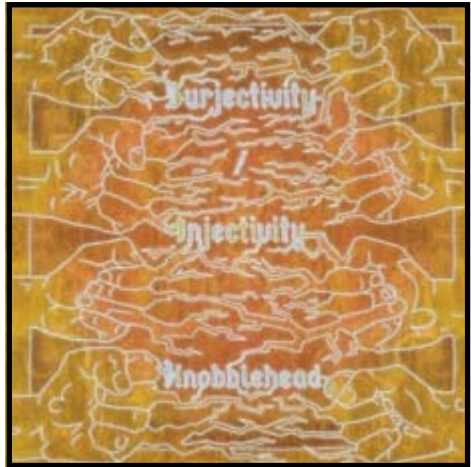
Here are eleven short and mostly sweet (in a rambunctious kind of way) chunks of ebullient power-pop that are mostly fuzz and froth but come topped with heart and personality and a generally ragged charm that can hide the odd misstep, those rare moments when the tune in hand gets left behind in the hurry to get onto the next number. Luckily, for the most part, there’s something better just round the corner when that does occur, so the bish, bash bosh of ‘When It Snows’ quickly makes way for the pretty, melodic tumble of ‘Plan’.

They’re at their best when they mix up vocals, as on the full-pelt ‘Purple’ and the nominally more summery and lightweight ‘Creamed Corn’. The mood mostly hovers around the giddy euphoria mark (‘Chestbuster’ a particular high point on



that score) and at times we’re reminded of the wonderful Guided By Voices: high praise indeed. ‘The Captain’ is a suitably belligerent slab of heavyweight fuzzgun noise to end on but the album’s highlight comes on ‘Sunday’, a rare slow-down from the band, allowing a delicacy to show itself as well as some epic spangle alongside the torrents of noise that are Junk Whale’s stock in trade, a simple musical pleasure for those time when you just want some music to carry you across the night and over the finish line.

Dale Kattack



KNOBBLEHEAD

‘Surjectivity’ /

‘Injectivity’

(All Will Be Well)

Our puny brains aren’t able to cope with complex mathematical ideas or processes beyond how far a £20 note is going to stretch in any given local venue, so don’t expect us to shed too much light on the song titles on Knobblehead’s new single.

Perhaps they’re appropriate for a band whose psychedelic leanings are surely intended to open our minds to some wider consciousness. Hence the heavy Indian vibes of ‘Injectivity’ that sounds like the hypnotic soundtrack to a transcendental meditation session, bandleader Row Januah conjuring a nicely opiated folk-pop mantra alongside singers Trinity de Simone and Liv Duval. This is the sound of the 60s

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TRANSMISSIONS

FROM NOWHERE

‘Transmissions From

Nowhere’

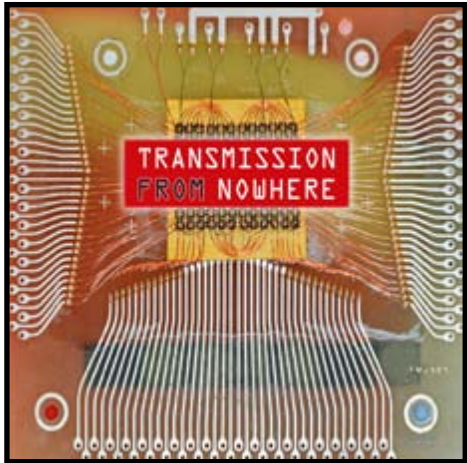
(Self released)

Soundtracks for imaginary films is hardly a novel concept; it’s something of a cliché in instrumental/post-rock circles. ‘Transmissions From Nowhere’ attempts to offer a twist on that trope, describing their music as themes from “television shows that never existed and never will,” which immediately suggests something of a retro vibe.

That guess isn’t too far off the mark as the band – made up of Dean Ryan, better known round these parts as a photographer, and Talulah Gosh/Heavenly/Marine Research legend Pete Momtchiloff, aided by various members of Les Clochards – hit a vaguely 70s-into-80s vibe for much of the time, krautrock mixing with atmospheric John Barry-like soundtracking and diversions into funkier waters.

We start off playing a game of “what type of show would this be the theme to?” but mostly they sound like lost cop, spy or detective shows, though the tone varies, so ‘Nerve Centre’ would be a gritty, tense cop thriller taking place on litter-strewn streets, while ‘Crankshaft’, for all its motorik propulsion, feels lighter and might be a cop show in the vein of *CHiPs*, but set on Germany’s autobahns. *FRiTTen*, perhaps. ‘Escape Velocity’ is part sci-fi drama, part dark western, so something along the lines of *Westworld*, while the funkier Hammond rock of ‘Big Len’ is surely the introduction to a loveable gangster of the same name (“E loves ‘is ma!’”). The best tracks go for a more brooding John Barry vibe, so the icy, Doors-inspired ‘This Is Tomorrow’ and the similarly chilled ‘Telefunken’ would be earthy, post-watershed dramas in the *Get Carter* mould. Where these musical concepts can fall down is in feeling like detached pieces of incidental music in need of visuals to give them context, and things wander towards the end of the album, ‘Spark Up’ a throwaway 70s piece; ‘New Air’ little more than noodling MOR rock and ‘Black Bombers’ a laborious surf-tinged chug. Perhaps a full DVD with arty visuals, an appearance by a young John Thaw or some of those litter-strewn streets and alleyways might bring it more fully to life.

Dale Kattack



BEN OSBORN

‘Letters From The Border’

(Nonostar Records)

‘Letters From The Border’ is released by Nonostar Records, a label led by Alex Stolze, who partners Ben Osborn here both as a producer and a violin player. Nonostar have also released works by Solo Collective – featuring players including Oxford’s Sebastian Reynolds – and with whom this album shares a similar, faintly experimental, digitally-tinged acoustic soundworld.

The blurb accompanying the release places the meaning behind ‘Letters From The Border’ as “Osborn’s Eastern-European Jewish ancestry and the struggles faced by migrants and refugees today”. Very laudable indeed, and very timely: musical reactions to the ongoing small-mindedness and protectionism engulfing what some thought were sensible, open countries are welcome. It seems likely that such reactions should either be shrouded by a weariness and sadness, or carry anguish, anger and frustration. The ten tracks of this album tend musically towards the former; a quiet, delicate, intimate core, positioning Osborn as an introspective observer of goings-on, rather than a rabble-rousing upsetter. That delicacy enhances the weight of emotion that is so obviously on display here: ‘Letters From The Border’ isn’t exactly a fun album crammed with upbeat party bangers. With an extraordinary clarity, and a sense of the understanding of the value of space, Osborn offers slow-paced, quiet and measured songs. They’re deceptively simple, and have a sparseness that belies some musical complexity: violins, strings, guitar, piano melodies and more are given small

digital nudges and reworked into new streams of sound, without ever losing a spacious, precise form. The vocal style is mannered and close, and – to these ears – it slightly lessens the impact of what could have been a powerfully-wordless piece for the most part, but, then, I’m not much of an appreciator of lyrics.

Overall, it’s a long-feeling and demanding album, but – perhaps like some of the best records – it’ll reward the careful and focussed listener.

Simon Minter



DOCTOR STEEVO

‘This Mutoid’

(Self released)

In 1877 the great art socialist William Morris wrote: “I don’t want art for a few, any more than I want education for a few, or freedom for a few.”

And so it has come to fruition in the 21st Century, with the digitising of creativity, especially in the arena of music apps, that the accelerating democratisation of remix production has left the literal ‘disc jockeying’ of the 90s coughing in a haze of burning rubber.

Now, with a minimum of tech, but still crucially a lion heart of talent, sound artists like Doctor Steevo (aka Steevo Nuissier, who has settled in Oxford, via Paris and London) can blossom at will and here he has concocted his second album of the year, which this time concentrates his focus on cross-pollinating instrumental EDM, trip hop and chillout live and manipulating everything in real time.

So, where is the musical chops in that, you ask. To which I say, even with the whole recorded history of music and beats at your fingertips, you still require some adroit arrangement skills to stand as tall as these tracks do, with the best of the Buddha Bar and Cafe del Mar stables. ‘And the Universe’ is the sort of slick Middle Eastern workout you’d expect to encounter in one of Istanbul’s more international nightclubs, while ‘As It Should Be’ is classy ambient music that could bed a video of a gliding albatross over tropical waters.

It is, in the words of Doctor Steevo himself, “modern music for our modern times”, and the album is immersed in endlessly cool influences, from Berkana Sowelu, to Joy Division, to Grand Master Flash, on into the sexy Marvin vs Lana backing track of ‘Under The Heat of the Sun’ and finishing brightly with the glitchy sax knockabout of ‘Fishing the Escape’. The full track list even reads as a poem! Welcome to art for the many.

Paul Carrera



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G1G GUIDE

SUNDAY 1st

JEN BERKOVA + JOS KELLY + ELLA McMURRAY: The Bullingdon – Powerful, soulful acoustic pop and electro/r’n’b from local rising talent Jen Berkova, tonight making her headline debut, drawing comparisons to Sade, Ellie Goulding and Nilufer Yanya along the way.
GIMP WORLD + BASIC DICKS + LIVID + COWLEY CHAINSAWS + MISERY GUTS: The Library – A sad but doubtless sonically uncompromising farewell to Smash Disco, who are bowing out after six years showcasing the best in underground punk and hardcore, both locally and

Tuesday 3rd

PARTNER / DEATH OF THE MAIDEN: The Jericho Tavern

All Tamara’s Parties continues to lead the line in showcasing female and non-binary musicians in Oxford and this month welcomes Canadian duo Partner to town for the first time, the Ontario duo’s wry slacker vignettes drawing a woozy stoner line between Nirvana, kd lang and Melissa Etheridge. Stoner being the operative word as Lucy Niles and Josee Caron – who previously played together in brilliantly-named hardcore band Go Get Fucked – make it a musical mission to document the often hilarious experiences of stuff like going to the shops while stoned, with all its inherent pitfalls, accidentally discovering a room-mate’s sex toys while hunting for hidden dope, or simply falling in love someone on the sports team. Everything is delivered in a rich growl, reminiscent of Kristin Hersh, or sunshine harmonies that sound like Tegan and Sara joined Weezer. As they say themselves: we’re funny but we’re not a joke. Support tonight comes from ATP hosts Death of the Maiden, their darkly romantic poetry and nightmare-infused baroque pop having provided us with a contender for of the year in ‘The Girl With The Secret Fire’, the drama and emotional intensity of Tamara Parsons-Baker’s songs still leaving room for moments of humour and a lightness of musical touch.



SEPTEMBER

from around the world. Tonight’s last stand features Glasgow’s Gimp World, made up of three quarters of Anxiety and featuring Michael Kasparis from Apostille on vocals. Among the suitably belligerent supporting cast are anarcho-punk/vegancore crew Basic Dicks, rabble-rousing punk scrappers Cowley Chainsaws and no-frills, all-thrills punkers Misery Guts. Goin’ out with a bang.
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

MONDAY 2nd

OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 3rd

PARTNER + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN: The Jericho Tavern – All Tamara’s Parties welcomes Canadian duo Partner to town for the first time – *see main preview*
URBAN FOLK QUARTET: The North Wall, Summertown – Lively folk and roots from the acclaimed quartet, out on another mammoth UK tour, fusing global sounds, from traditional English and Celtic, to Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Afrobeat, Indian, Cuban, bluegrass and funk into their jigs, reels and songs.
HARP SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 4th

CHILDCARE: The Bullingdon – Airy, groove-led psychedelia and spiky art-pop from south London’s oddball Childcare, out on tour to promote debut album ‘Wabi-Sabi’ after a string of well-received singles and EPs, mixing wellness sessions into their shows.
TIGER MENDOZA + CHARLIE BAXTER + AFTER THE THOUGHT: The Wheatshaeaf – Dark electronics and beats, industrial clang, metal riffage and hip hop grooves from Ian de Quadros and crew at tonight’s Dancing Man show, alongside ambient electronic and post-rock soundscaping from Matt Chapman Jones’ After the Thought.
MI MYE + LAUGHING LAMB + LUKE PICASSO + KADONNUT: The Port Mahon – Dark-hearted, romantic folk-inclined rock from Scottish singer and fiddle player Jamie Lockhart and his Leeds-based band at tonight’s Divine Schism show, drawing comparisons to The National, Sparklehorse and King Creosote.

THURSDAY 5th

ROB TOGNONI + HELL’S GAZELLES: The Bullingdon – The Tasmanian blues devil returns to the Haven Club, displaying the powerful and versatile electric style that’s served him well in his 30-plus years on the road, owing much to Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Hard rocking support from local crew Hell’s Gazelles, channelling Led Zep, Judas Priest and Guns’n’Roses.
FLAT LAGER + THE REZNER: The Jericho Tavern – Grubby, grungy yob-rock action from Oxford/Aylesbury crew Flat Lager, keeping it

boozy and belligerent.
BRACO: Cirkus – It’s All About the Music show.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s long-running open night builds up to its 25th anniversary, showcasing singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.

FRIDAY 6th

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY + PORT IN A STORM + RHYS WARRINER: O2 Academy – Coldplay tribute.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE OTHER ONES + BARKUS & BRANNIGAN + SHAVEN PRIMATES: The Wheatshaeaf – Playful, punky power pop from London’s The Other Ones at this month’s Klub Kakofanney, the band taking inspiration from Sleater Kinney, Buzzcocks and Ramones along the way. Local rock’n’roller Des Barkus joins the party as do epic, riff-heavy prog-rockers Shaven Primates.
MASTER OF NONE + LOVELACE: The Bullingdon – Gothic electro-rocking in the vein of Mark Lanegan, The Horrors and Suicide from Ian Mitchell’s Master of None, the band mining the deepest, darkest depths of the musical and emotional well.
PITCHBLACK: The Bullingdon – Techno club night with Katiusha, Rortingah and John Swede.
THE EPSTEIN & FRIENDS: The Port Mahon – Local folk-rock and alt.country heroes The Epstein launch their new monthly Make This Your Home residency, playing alongside friends and special guests from local folk and Americana scene, tonight with electro duo Crandle joining them.
PUPPET MECHANIC + LONDON GRAFFITI + CUBAN DUKES: Cirkus – It’s All About the Music show with atmospheric gothic-indie-country crew Puppet Mechanic, taking inspiration from Tindersticks and Radiohead.
OTTO + THE AUTUMN SAINTS + JACK LESTER: The Jericho Tavern
THE BARLEYCORN BAND: The Burton Taylor Theatre – Traditional Irish tunes and Celtic-inspired songs from the New Zealand band.
FAUX FIGHTERS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to Mr Grohl and chums.

SATURDAY 7th

NO HOT ASHES: O2 Academy – Stockport’s funk-tinged indie rockers head off on tour to promote debut album ‘Hardship Starship’ after supports to Spring King, Blossoms, Amazons and Prides.
OX-SKOOL BREAKS #1 ft. PETE CANNON: The Bullingdon – first night of the new old-skool breaks, hardcore and jungle techno club night with special guest Pete Cannon from Kniteforce and N4 Records, alongside labelmates Alk-E-D, Deluxe, Bustin, Paul Bradley, The Lowercase, Beano and more.
GYPSY FINGERS: Old Fire Station – Return to town for the folk, pop, spoken word, classical and electronic duo, formed by Victoria Cogham and Luke Oldfield – son of Mike Oldfield.
MEANS OF PRODUCTION + THE PINK

DIAMOND REVUE + MOJAVE + OCTAVIA FREUD: The Port Mahon – Stark, minimalist Ballardian electro-pop and post-punk from local synth duo Means of Production, taking inspiration from Chromatics, Cabaret Voltaire and Depeche Mode as well as early acid house pioneers like A Guy Called Gerald. Great psychedelic/surf/electro support from Reading’s TPDR.
SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The Port Mahon – Sparky hosts his monthly bands and open jam session in the downstairs bar.
STARBELLY: Cirkus – Gothic glam-stomp from the local rockers at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show
LUKE JACKSON + THE MAD MARSTON HARES: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Traditional English folk and storytelling from the much-travelled Luke Jackson at tonight’ Wychwood Folk Club show, Jackson, a former Young Artist of the Year nominee at the BBC Folk Awards, having supported Fairport, Glenn Tilbrook, Show of Hands and Seth Lakeman among many others over the years. Bluegrass, Appalachian folk and western swing from fiddle, guitar, banjo and cajon trio The Mad Marston Hares in support.

Thursday 12th

MCLUSKY*: The Bullingdon

“All your friends are cunts / Your mother is a ball point pen thief” is up there with the greatest opening lines of any song, but Andy Faulkous’ scabrous, darkly witty, often surreal lyricism doesn’t end there, as he led Mclusky through short, sharp – painfully sharp – and downright hysterical hardcore swamp blues that married The Birthday Party to The Jesus Lizard via Big Black. The Cardiff trio – singer, guitarist and lyrical demon Faulkous joined by bassist Jonathan Chapple and drummer Matthew Harding (later replaced by Jack Eggleton) – burnt an incendiary path across the UK live scene from the late 90s to 2005 when they split. They left behind a small but faultless trio of albums: debut ‘My Pain and Sadness is More Sad and Painful Than Yours’; the nailed-on classic ‘Mclusky Do Dallas’ and the wonderfully titled ‘The Difference Between Me and You Is That I’m Not On Fire’. Chapple formed Shooting At Unarmed Men, while Falkous fronted Future of the Left, gradually introducing more Mclusky songs into his set, until the pair reunited in 2015 – now with an added asterix – to play a few charity shows and returned to being a genius face slap to rock complacency. Tonight is the group’s first Oxford show since the early Noughties, and the debut promotion for Freak Scene, who have instantly become our favourite promoters. Behold the genius of Mclusky, people. You are not worthy, so shut up and let them bring the noise.



CORSAIRS: Woodstock Social Club – Rockabilly, punk and ska from the veteran local trio.
THE A-WATTS: The Volunteer, Grove – Classic 50s and 60s rock’n’roll from the local veterans.

SUNDAY 8th

HERIOT + GRIEF RITUAL + 13 BURNING + THE HOPE BURDEN: The Bullingdon – Heavy night with Swindon metallers Heriot alongside hardcore and post-metal crew Grief Ritual, old school metallers 13Burning and expansive post-metal from local noisemakers The Hope Burden.
PUPPET MECHANIC + SUE SMITH & PHIL FREIZINGER + MATT SEWELL + PAUL LODGE: The Wheatshaeaf (3.30-7pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar.
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

MONDAY 9th

OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms – Classic jazz and ragtime from the local ensemble, playing Jellyroll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino and more.
THE FURROW COLLECTIVE: Nettlebed Folk Club – Traditional folk balladry from a quartet of folk luminaries – Rachel Newton, Lucy Farrell, Emily Portman and Alasdair Roberts.
OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 10th

WEDNESDAY 11th

SKINNY MOLLY: The Bullingdon – Good ol’ southern rock from Nashville’s Skinny Molly at tonight’s Haven Club show, the band formed by former Lynyrd Skynyrd and Blackfoot guitarist Mike Estes, and originally featuring Molly Hatchet’s Dave Hlubek.
KAPUTT + LUCY LEAVE + MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Brilliantly offbeat wonk-pop and post-punk funk from Glasgow’s Kaputt at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the band bringing a Beefheart-like wobbliness to influences like Devo, Gang of Four and The Au Pairs. Suitably off-kilter local support from Lucy Leave, coming in where Deerhoof meet The Minutemen and lo-fi electro maestro Moogieman.
THE LASSES + MEGAN HENWOOD: Fusion Arts – Upcycled Sounds host Amsterdam folk duo The Lasses, touring their new album ‘Undone’, plus local folk singer Megan Henwood.

THURSDAY 12th

MCLUSKY + SELF HELP + WORRY: The Bullingdon – Scathing snark-core from Andy Falkous’ reformed noise brigade – *see main preview*
THE QUENTINS: The Wheatshaeaf – Poetic indie rocking from the former Aureate Act crew.
GRAND PALACE SCAM: Cirkus – It’s All About the Music show.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock, with sets from Indiana Dave & The Raider, Tom Ivey and Richard Brotherton.
GERRY COLVIN: The Unicorn, Abingdon – Former skiffle-punk man Colvin, one half of Terry & Gerry, brings his solo show to the Unicorn’s monthly folk night.



Saturday 14th

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?: East Oxford Community Centre / Fusion Arts

After two successful, sold out years, If Not Now, When? has become one of those essential dates in the local music calendar, a pocket-sized all-day festival that positively crams the quality in – over 30 acts and DJs spread across three rooms, all within a few short paces of each other. The day isn’t really about headliners but Durham’s Fortuna Pop-signed **MARTHA** top the bill with their frantic and fun anarcho power pop and garage rock, fuzzgun guitars, four-way harmonies and sweet melodies coating succinct political messages. They’re joined by Supernormal and Audioscope veterans **BILGE PUMP**, kicking out artful noise rock; Massachusetts’ militant, mutant funk-core crew **PILE**; visceral, slow-burning grunge and post-punk from **GHUM** (*pictured*), taking inspiration from Savages, Joy Division and Dum Dum Girls; Nottingham’s inventively hypnotic rhythm duo **RATTLE**; London’s classic indie fuzz and jangle, surf, 60s girl group and bubblegum popsters **CHORUSGIRL**; electro/dream-poppers **BELL LUNGS**; Derby’s noise-pop and garage rockers **PET CROW**; recent Big Joanie tour support **SECRET POWER**, with their dark post-punk funk; motorik indie fuzzsters **SCHANDE**; Leeds’ garage punk trio **NERVOUS TWITCH**, and a whole heap more, including a sizeable local contingent that includes former Fixers frontman **JACK GOLDSTEIN**, as well as **MASIRO**; **THEO**; **JUNK WHALE**; **SPANK HAIR**; **LIMPET SPACE RACE** and recent *Nightshift* Track of the Month winner **MURDERACH**. Small, noisy, perfectly formed, INN.W? bridges the gap between outdoor festival season and getting back into the business of indoor grassroots gigging, and does it in style. The stuff we have going on in this tiny city of ours should never be taken for granted.

FRIDAY 13th

XTRAVERTS + ORDER#227 + SHIV3RS: The Wheatshaeaf – High Wycombe’s original punk crew come to Oxford, Nigel Martin and his band having played The Vortex and The Roxy back in the 70s. Local hardcore punks Order#227 provide suitably belligerent support.
THUNDERSTRUCK: The Bullingdon – AC/DC tribute.
BREAK STUFF: The Bullingdon – Nu-metal club night.
BLACK HATS + MAKE FRIENDS + THE FOLIANTS + CHALK: Port Mahon – Angular



Thursday 19th

CULTDREAMS / JUNK WHALE / PET SEMETARY:

The Library

To misquote *Bladerunner*, talk about beauty and the beast, Cultdreams are both. Having recently changed their name from Kamikaze Girls, the Brighton-based duo have just released their second album, ‘Things That Hurt’ on Big Scary Monsters, and it’s a towering wall of glorious noise and venomous lyricism. Atmospheric spangle, fuzz and liberally used chorus pedals provides the soaring backdrop to Lucinda Livingstone’s diatribes, notably on recent single ‘Not My Generation’, a scouring take-down of misogyny and right wing politics that Crass would have been proud of. Elsewhere she sings about mental health, PTSD, and the state of the world right now, but always coated in that luxuriant wash of sound that’s the pensive meeting point between shoegaze and punk, a place where The Cure, Slowdive and Fucked Up happily co-exist. Glorious stuff. And quality local support at tonight’s Snuggle Dice show from fuzzed-up emo/power pop crew Junk Whale, coming in somewhere nearabouts Weezer and The Wonder Years, and dark-hearted, emotionally charged gothic blues from Pet Sematary.

art-pop, new wave, dub and stadium rocking from the returning local faves, whose new ‘Bad News Telephone’ EP sees them taking inspiration from XTC and The Cure, to The Jam and Futureheads. **TRAUMA UK + DAS GHOUL: Cirkus** – It’s All About the Music show with old school Witney punks Trauma UK. **THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Black Swan** – Lively mix of blues, rock, funk, psych, ska and folk from the veteran local crew.

SATURDAY 14th

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?: East Oxford Community Centre – Full day of live indie and DIY music across three rooms from Divine Schism and Idiot King – *see main preview* **THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES + THE AUGUST LIST: The Port Mahon** – EP launch gig from the country-soul stars, finding a sweet spot between The Harlem Apollo and the Grand Ole Opry, The Band and Aretha Franklin, and one of the most reliably entertaining live acts in town. They’re joined by long-time *Nightshift* faces The August List, bringing dark drone-rock atmospherics into their darkwoods folk and Americana. **DANNY EVANS & MICK O’CONNOR: The**

Harcourt Arms **MOGMATIC: Cirkus** – It’s All About the Music show with the local bluesy rockers. **PIZZA MIC: Oxford Central Library** – One-off open mic session in aid of Oxford Food Bank. **SHEPHERD’S PIE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Heavy rock covers. **CHRIS KENWOOD: Woodstock Social Club** – Country and western night. **THE A-WATTS: Challow British Legion**

SUNDAY 15th

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (4-6.30pm) – Rock and blues covers from the veteran local singer and guitarist. **OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon** **PERCY PURSGLOVE, FRANK HARRISON & MARKHODGSON: The Abingdon Arms, Beckley** – Free live jazz from the trumpet, keys and bass trio.

MONDAY 16th

JOHNNY COPPIN & PHIL BEER: Nettlebed Folk Club – Veteran pianist and songwriter, and long-time musical partner of Mike Silver, Johnny Coppin, teams up with Show of Hands mainstay Phil Beer. **SCANDINAVIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon** **OPEN MIC: The Castle**

TUESDAY 17th

FERRIS & SYLVESTER: The Bullingdon – 60s Greenwich Village-style folk and blues rocking from Streatham duo Issy Ferris and Archie Sylvester, mixing up the influences of Jack White, Simon & Garfunkel and First Aid Kit, out on a headline tour having previously supported Tom Jones and gone out as part of Bob Harris’ Under the Appletree Sessions tour. **JIM DVORAK & HARRISON SMITH: Old Fire Station** – Oxford Improvisers night with the sax and trumpet duo. **PIZZA MIC: The Library** – Open mic session.

WEDNESDAY 18th

KELLY JONES: The New Theatre – Oh, good.

THURSDAY 19th

CULTDREAMS + JUNK WHALE + PET SEMETARY: The Library – Beautiful noise and righteous fury all in one bottle – shake well and spray liberally – *see main preview* **CENTRELINE UK + SPRUNG FROM CAGES + NUMBER 38 + OUTER BLUE: The Bullingdon** – Pop-punk from local rockers Centreline UK at tonight’s It’s All About the Music gig, plus buzzsaw punk from Sprung From Cages. **THE PETER BRUNTNELL BAND ft. BJ COLE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Twenty years since his last visit to Oxfordshire (by our reckoning) Welsh-born, Devon-based Americana cult star Peter Bruntnell returns, courtesy of Empty Room Promotions, the singer-songwriter, beloved of Kurt Wagner, Jay Farrar and Peter Buck, is touring his latest album, ‘King of Madrid’, a back to basics record after previous forays into psychedelia and new wave, his downbeat songwriting inspired by Son Volt, Neil Young and Elvis Costello. **LONDON KLEZMER QUARTET: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley** – Traditional klezmer tunes at tonight’s supper club show. **CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre**

FRIDAY 20th

FOREIGN BEGGARS: O2 Academy – London’s hip hop outfit continue to adapt to survive, the band having left their early boom bap sound behind to explore dubstep, electronica, grime and more. Latest album ‘2.2 Karma’ leans back to NWA at times with MCs Metropolis and Vulgatron at their best when they keep it personal and introspective. **BOYZLIFE: O2 Academy** – In a fusion more horrific than Jeff Goldblum and that insect in *The Fly*, Keith Duffy of Boyzone and Brian McFadden from Westlife become a single organism and turn pop music into a vile vomit-style gloop. Suck it up, kids. **THE LEISURE SOCIETY: The Bullingdon** – Gorgeously bucolic melancholy from the Ivor Novello-nominated folk-pop ensemble – *see main preview* **HAUS PARTY: The Bullingdon** **WAITRESS FOR THE BEES + DUOTONE + RED CAROUSEL: Old Fire Station** – A return to Oxford for one of the most inventive and engaging talents around in the form of Waitress For the Bees. Canadian singer and viola player Emma Hooper was the star of Irregular Folks’ Summer Session in

Friday 20th

THE LEISURE SOCIETY: The Bullingdon

Gorgeously sombre folk-pop from The Leisure Society tonight; the Brighton-based band is centred around singer Nick Hemming, once a member of psychedelic noise rockers The Telescopes and a former bandmate of Shane Meadows and Paddy Considine, and Christian Hardy. Hemming wrote soundtrack music for *A Room For Romeo Brass* and *Dead Man’s Shoes* and The Leisure Society shares a similar feel for wide open spaces and romantic atmospherics. Their mix of folk, country, orchestral pop, campfire simplicity and kids TV theme tunes has seen them compared to Grizzly Bear and Fleet Foxes, as well as Ennio Morricone, Belle & Sebastian and even Jethro Tull at various points; theirs is a peculiarly English take on Americana: wistful regret and an air of menace hanging around their dreamily bucolic songs. And what songs: ‘The Last of the Melting Snow’ from their debut album earned them an Ivor Novello nomination in 2009, and they became one of a select group of acts to earn consecutive nominations when ‘Save It For Someone Who Cares’ was selected in 2010. Not that those were career peaks: 2015’s ‘The Fine Art of Hanging’ was their most critically acclaimed and commercially successful album to date, and they were invited to support Laura Marling on tour. As they prepare to release their fifth album, ‘Arrivals and Departures’, critical love is increasingly matched by a deserved wider popularity.



2016 and their Christmas show at St Barnabas in 2017, her idiosyncratic songs about insects and dinosaurs off the scale in their strange, funny and highly educational way, bringing existential melancholy to bear on a tale of an aquatic dinosaur unable to lift its head out of the water for its entire life, but also a sense of joy to a celebration of stick insects. She’s a genuinely fascinating presence, explaining each song’s back story to reveal a mind possessed of both childlike enthusiasm and professorial knowledge, the songs themselves injecting humour, warmth, deep pathos and a sinister undercurrent. Tonight she has a local musical master in support in the form of cellist, singer and loopmeister Duotone, the much travelled and in-demand Barney Morse Brown whose equally adventurous and emotive songs have made him one of Oxford’s most beloved performers. String quartet Red Carousel open, taking inspiration from Penguin Cafe Orchestra and Nils Frahm. **SHAVEN PRIMATES + CRYSTALLITE + EMMA HUNTER: The Wheatshaf** – It’s All About the Music show with heavy duty prog crew Shaven Primates and grungy rockers Crystallite.

BAKA BEYOND: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley – Return to the Isis for Martin Cradick and Sue Hart’s afro-celtic fusion band, inspired by the songs, rhythms and traditions of Cameroon and Congo’s Baka people. **LATIN OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon** **THE CALLIERS: Cirkus** – It’s All About the Music show. **MAROON V + KILL3RS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Double dose of tribute action. **THE A-WATTS: Bletchington Social Club**

SATURDAY 21st

SICE + PAUL BIRTILL + MATT McMANAMON + JULIAN CONOR REID: The Jericho Tavern – A rare solo show from former Boo Radleys frontman Sice ahead of his appearance at the Shiine On Weekender later in the year. Expect classic 90s indie hits ‘Wake Up Boo’, ‘From the Bench at Belvidere’ and the glorious ‘Lazarus’ along the way, plus tracks from his Creation Records solo album ‘Eggman - The First Fruits’ and songs from his forthcoming album. He’s supported tonight by stark, hard hitting Liverpooldian poet Paul Birtill; ‘Riot Radio’ rudeboy, former member of The Dead 60s and purveyor of “scally folk”, Matt McManamon, plus Oxford-resident scouse songsmith Jules Reid. **MUSICAL MEDICINE ft. JIMMY ROUGE: The Bullingdon** – The monthly funk, soul, disco and house club night welcomes Orange Tree Edits’ Jimmy Rouge to the party, playing his trademark set of afro-disco bangers. **BORN IDEAL + JAGUAR MILK + GRANT NEAL: The Wheatshaf** – Local bands showcase with young newcomers Born Ideal. **HACKNEY COLLIERY BAND: The North Wall, Summertown** – Brass and beats from the east London collective, fusing Balkan folk, contemporary jazz, soul, hip hop, rock and afrobeat to make for a lively concoction that’s seen them play alongside the late Amy Winehouse as well as the London 2012 Closing Ceremony and supporting Kylie at her Blenheim Palace show in the summer.

JAMES MORGAN: The Harcourt Arms **MAY TUMI + MATT CHANARIN + SIMON DAVIES & COLIN FLETCHER: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock** – Acoustic evening in aid of Amnesty International. **HAIRFORCE 5: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – 80s hair metal faves. **HOOLI-FRUTTS: Woodstock Social Club** – Rock, funk and pop covers. **THE A-WATTS: Marston British Legion**

SUNDAY 22nd

MERMAIDENS + JULIA MEIJER: The Library – Dark, atmospheric indie, post-punk and gothic grunge from New Zealand’s Mermaids, over in the UK to promote their album ‘Look Me In The Eye’, the band’s mix of spidery guitars, jittery rhythms and often haunting vocal harmonies drawing comparisons to Sleater Kinney in the past, the Wellington trio having supported them over in NZ as well as Mac DeMarco and Death Cab For Cutie. Recent *Nightshift* cover star Julia Meijer supports. **RICHARD WALTERS: New College Chapel** – Angel-voiced star Richard Walters returns to Oxford for a special orchestral show to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his gorgeous debut album ‘The Animal’, with songs from that record – recently reissued on blue vinyl – reworked by Luke Lewis. Richard, who recently signed to Cooking Vinyl Records, is set to support Babybird on tour in November. **OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon** **SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Wheatshaf (3.30pm)** – It’s All About the Music host a free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar, with sets from The Holy Fools, Lost Dogs and more.

MONDAY 23rd

DERVISH: Nettlebed Folk Club – Traditional Irish songs, tunes and dances from County Sligo’s folk icons and former Eurovision entry (they came last), making a rare visit to the Shire. **OPEN MIC: The Castle**

TUESDAY 24th

NEW HOPE CLUB: O2 Academy – With this asinine, sub-Vamps congealed musical putrefaction, you really are spoiling us. **OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon**

WEDNESDAY 25th

THE SEAN WEBSTER BAND + THE MAL REEVES BAND: The Bullingdon – rocking blues at The Haven Club tonight with Sean Webster and his band, the singer and guitarist inspired by Albert Collins, Eric Clapton and Gary Moore, while vocally his deep, husky delivery recalls Joe Cocker and Bryan Adams. **GALICIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon**

THURSDAY 26th

SUBMOTION ORCHESTRA + SO SO SUN + TILLY VALENTINE: O2 Academy – Return to town for Leeds collective Submotion Orchestra with their woozy fusion of dub, funk, jazz and drum&bass, mixing influences from Morcheeba and Lamb to Sade



It’s All About the Music presents...

5th Braco @ Cirkus 7pm
6th Master Of None / Lovelace / Shiv3rs @ The Bullingdon
6th Puppet Mechanic / London Graffiti / Cuban Dukes @ Cirkus 7pm
7th Means Of Production / The Pink Diamond Revue / Mojave / Octavia Freud Port Mahon 7pm
7th Starbelly @ Cirkus 7pm
11th New band night @ The Wheatshaf 7.30pm
12th Grand Palace Scam @ Cirkus 7pm
13th Funnel Music tour feat. Black Hats / Make Friends / The Foliants / Chalk @ The Port Mahon 7pm
13th Trauma UK / Das Ghoul @ Cirkus 7pm
14th Mogmatic @ Cirkus 7pm
19th Centerline Uk / Sprung From Cages / Number 38 / Outer Blue @ The Bullingdon
20th The Calliers @ Cirkus 7pm
20th Shaven Primates / Crystallite / Emma Hunter @ The Wheatshaf 7.30pm
22nd The Sunday Social Afternoon The Holy Fools / Lost Dogs + more @ The Wheatshaf 3.30pm; free entry
25th New band night @ The Wheatshaf 7.30pm
27th Flintlock Rifles / Be Still / New Depth @ The Wheatshaf 7.30pm
27th Americana Night feat. The Holy Fools & more @ The Port Mahon downstairs; free entry 8pm
28th Celtic Vibes feat. La Phooka & more in the downstairs bar @ Port Mahon; free entry 8pm
28th Osprey & Co @ The Half Moon 9pm
28th The Jerichos @ Cirkus





Thursday 26th

THE BEVIS FROND / BIRDS OF HELL / SHOTGUN SIX:

The Jericho Tavern

Nick Saloman is one of those cult artists with a back catalogue so extensive any newcomer might be daunted about where to start. For his part Saloman – who to all intents and purposes *is* The Bevis Frond – started back in the 1960s, in his native Walthamstow where he was mates with a young Adam Ant and played in a band called The Bevis Frond Museum. Since the mid-80s he has (mostly self-) released a steady stream of albums as The Bevis Frond, of which last year’s ‘We’re Your Friends, Man’ was his 27th, although he went into semi hibernation for much of the Noughties, concentrating on remastering previous releases. Despite the depth of his back catalogue, Saloman has remained loyal to the path of psychedelia pretty much from the start, exploring its boundaries, from garage rock to a more pastoral path, a gentle natured British eccentricity battling with its axe hero desires at its core, which has seen him compared to Syd Barrett, Robert Wyatt and Robyn Hitchcock, but also Hendrix – his chief musical love – and Neil Young. At every turn mainstream success has been well beyond the horizon, his closest brush with fame being an appearance on *Countdown* in 1991, but his devoted following, including Stewart Lee and J Mascis, continues to sustain him. Support at tonight’s Divine Schism show comes from Norwich’s atmospheric electro-pop and shoegaze crew Birds of Hell, and local down’n’dirty psych-rock groovers Shotgun Six.

and beloved of Gilles Peterson.

THE BEVIS FROND + BIRDS OF HELL + SHOTGUN SIX: **The Jericho Tavern** – Myriad shades of psychedelic soundmaking from the veteran cult star – *see main preview*

SHAVEN PRIMATES + THE MIGHTY REDOX + OLD ERNIE: **The Port Mahon** – Heavy-duty prog in the vein of King Crimson, Tool and Pink Floyd from Shaven Primates, plus party-hearty blues, rock and more from The Mighty Redox and skewed grunge noise from Old Ernie. **CATWEAZLE:** **East Oxford Community Centre** **REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET:** **The Half Moon** – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock, with sets from Caola McMahon, Raymond Burke and Richard Brotherton.

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion is the 20th of each month, no exceptions. Listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be used without permission.

FRIDAY 27th

POZI: The Port Mahon – Melancholic but discordant post-punk from south London trio Pozi, using the stark, musically skeletal set-up of violin, bass and drums to bring together the influences of ESG, The Fall, TV Personalities and Devo. **FLINTLOCK RIFLES + BE STILL + NEW DEPTH:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Indie punk and alt. rock from Flintlock Rifles at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show, alongside Witney’s fuzzgun popstrels Be Still. **AMERICANA NIGHT:** **The Port Mahon**

SATURDAY 28th

BOSSAPHONIK with PAT THOMAS & THE KWASHIBA AREA BAND + PAPA NUI: **Isis Farmhouse, Ifley Lock** – The world jazz dance club night celebrates its 15th anniversary in style with a headline set from leading Ghanaian hi-life stars Pat Thomas and Kwashibu Area Band. The now-72 year old Thomas, dubbed “the golden voice of Africa”, has a fifty-year musical career under his belt; his collaborations include afrobeat drummer pioneer Tony Allen and highlife icon Ebo Taylor, while with his new band he’s stolen the show at WOMAD and earned a reputation as one of the best West African acts around.

EVIL SCARECROW + THE GRAND MAL + DAMAGED REICH + IMMINENT ANNIHILATION: **O2 Academy** – None more metal night of heaviosity at the O2 with Nottingham’s theatrical, semi-parody heavyweights Evil Scarecrow, led by Dr Rabid Hell, taking inspiration from Slayer, Cradle of Filth, Iron Maiden and more, their fun live show having them seen them play Download as well as the main stage at Bloodstock. Local support comes from stoner/groove metallers The Grand Mal – featuring members of Desert Storm and My Diablo; thrash merchants Damaged Reich, and Aylesbury’s Imminent Annihilation.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with GRUDGEWOOD + OUT INK + OXFORD SOUND ARCHIVE: **The Wheatsheaf** – Great triple bill at this month’s GTI with Junkie Brush and Drunkenstein alumni Grudgewood collectively mixing up prog, post-rock and 70s heavy rock into an instrumental journey. They’re joined by Sheffield’s abstract, angular and abrasive jazz-rockers Out Ink, inspired by Neu! Can, King Crimson, Beefheart and New York No Wave, plus ex-Vienna Ditto chap Nigel Firth’s new solo project Oxford Sound Archive, a psychedelic melting pot of electronic exploration and acid house.

K-FUNKZ: **The Bullingdon** – Bassline, drum&bass and hip hop club night. **OSPREY & FRIENDS:** **The Half Moon** – The local blues stalwart is joined by assorted chums. **THE JERICHOES:** **Cirkus** – It’s All About the Music show.

THE CHRIS INGHAM QUARTET: **St. Giles Church** – A tribute to Stan Getz at tonight’s show as part of the Jazz at St Giles autumn season. **FREEFALL:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rock covers. **PETE FRYER BAND:** **Northway Social Club** **THE A-WATTS:** **Bicester Ex-Servicemen’s Club**

SUNDAY 29th

THE PALE WHITE: **The Bullingdon** – Anthem, blues-heavy indie rocking in the vein of Ocean Colour Scene, Royal Blood and QOTSA from Newcastle’s cult hero trio, out on a tour of that there south to promote new single ‘Downer’, having previously supported Sam Fender, Amazons

and The Libertines.

FRESH + JUNK WHALE + MAX BLANSJAAR: **Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre (3.30pm)** – First of a new series of matinee shows from *Lunchtime For the Wild Youth* zine, kicking off with London emo crew Fresh. Big hearted and bolshy pop-punk and slacker rock in the vein of The Wonder Years from Junk Whale and fuzz-pop star Max Blansjaar in support.

OPEN MIC: **Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSION:** **The Half Moon** **THE MIGHTY REDOX:** **Tree, Ifley (4–6.30pm)** **BLUES JAM:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm)**

MONDAY 30th

THE NIGHT CAFE: **O2 Academy** – Exuberantly funky indie jangle from Liverpool’s fast-rising youngsters, back in town after their show here last year and touring their debut album ‘0151’.

SAM OUTLAW + LYDIA LUCE: **The Bullingdon** – SoCal country from Nashville’s Sam Outlaw, back at Empty Room – *see main preview* **PIANO JAZZ:** **The Harcourt Arms** **HOME SERVICE & JOHN TAMS:** **Nettlebed Folk Club** – The near-legendary folk-rock ensemble return to Nettlebed, having reunited with frontman John Tams.

Monday 30th

SAM OUTLAW / LYDIA LUCE:

The Bullingdon

Like so many country singers, Sam Outlaw has led an itinerant lifestyle. Born in South Dakota, he’s now resident in the home of country music, Nashville, having spent much of his adult life in Los Angeles, where he first began playing bar gigs while working in advertising. It wasn’t until he was 33 that he released his debut album, 2015’s ‘Angeleno’, produced by Ry and Joachim Cooder; his association with the pair earned him acclaim in country circles and rave reviews in *Rolling Stone* and *American Songwriter*, in particular his rich, mournful voice and tender songwriting style which have seen him compared to Dwight Yoakam and he quit his job to make music fulltime. Things have worked out pretty well so far for him. Self-duced follow-up album ‘Tenderheart’ saw him touring across the US as well as Europe and expanding his “SoCal country” sound into more pop and rock territory. Along the way he’s shared stages with Bonnie Raitt, Brandi Carlile and Jack Ingram at the 2016 tribute concert to Glenn Frey. Tonight sees him back at the Bully, again a guest of the reliably excellent Empty Room, and joined by fellow Nashville singer-songwriter Lydia Luce, set to release her second album later this year, having worked as a session musician and supported Peter Bradley Adams in recent times.



CHILDCARE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.09.19

THE LEISURE SOCIETY
The Bullingdon
Oxford
20.09.19

POZI
Port Mahon
Oxford
27.09.19

THE PALE WHITE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
29.09.19

THE NIGHT CAFE
O2 Academy2
Oxford
30.09.19

PLASTIC MERMAIDS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
02.10.19

CASSELS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
03.10.19

RICHARD HAWLEY
O2 Academy
Oxford
06.10.19

EASY LIFE
O2 Academy
Oxford
08.10.19

JOHN
The Wheatsheaf
Oxford
09.10.19

LEIF ERIKSON
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
15.10.19

THYLA
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.10.19

RITUAL UNION
Cowley Road
Oxford
19.10.19

DREADZONE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
25.10.19

JESCA HOOP
The Bullingdon
Oxford
31.10.19

CATE LE BON
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.11.19

YONAKA
O2 Academy2
Oxford
11.11.19

SPECTOR
The Bullingdon
Oxford
12.11.19

ALASKALASKA
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.11.19

JAWS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
18.11.19

BARNS COURTNEY
O2 Academy2
Oxford
22.10.19

FONTAINES D.C.
O2 Academy
Oxford
SOLD OUT

PENELOPE ISLES
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
27.11.19

RHYS LEWIS
O2 Academy2
Oxford
28.11.19

BEN OTTEWELL
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
30.11.19

JOHNNY LLOYD
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.12.19

LOW ISLAND
The Bullingdon
Oxford
06.12.19

APRE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
21.02.19

JAMIE CULLUM
New Theatre
Oxford
16.03.20

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Idles

TRUCK FESTIVAL Hill Farm, Steventon

FRIDAY

With Thursday’s record temperatures reducing us to a pool of sweat, we do a silent prayer to the weather gods that things cool down for the weekend: luckily they answer, and Friday’s overcast skies make for sweet relief. After a leisurely stroll around the grounds to establish our surroundings (meanwhile learning that ‘vintage clothing stalls’ is code for ‘bucket hat emporium’) we make our way over to the Virgins and Veterans stage to watch **DAISY**, local emo darlings performing our first set of Truck, but their very last gig. Despite self-deprecating jokes from the band that the set was the equivalent to ‘snapping the neck of an animal you’ve run over to put it out of its misery’, Daisy make the crowd giddy with fuzzy but glittery pop-punk bangers that the crowd go crazy for. It’s clear the band meant a lot to the Oxford music scene, and they go out triumphantly in a haze of mosh pits.

After the warm welcome provided by familiar faces, we head over to the Truck stage to witness **IDLES** execute absolute mastery. Despite being nominated for this year’s

Mercury Prize, we’d yet to hear much of their music; by the end of the set, we’re worshipping at their altar. Scorching, inexorable punk laden with riffs galore is interspersed with personal politics including support for immigration, the NHS, working class women, and male mental health. Given the election just days prior to the festival, anti-Tory sentiment is rife across the weekend, with almost every set we see peppered with a ‘f*ck Boris’ at some point; yet Idles are among the very few acts who realistically deliver their rage towards British politics. Every song feels like the anthem to the revolution. As the huge crowd rallies together to form mosh pit upon mosh pit, it becomes clear that frontman Joe Talbot commands one thing that Boris Johnson cannot: unity. **SHE DREW THE GUN** offer a similarly fresh take on politics-driven music, the Liverpoolian band responsible for a blinding set at the Bullingdon in March. It’s often the case with protest songs, or at least bands who are concerned with politics, that the music takes a back seat and good ideas pick up the slack for bad tracks. This isn’t

the case with Louisa Roach’s crew, whose music and message are as strong as each other. Songs like ‘Resister’ and ‘Something for the Pain’ stand out and it’s a shame they aren’t on later and for longer.

Over to the Market Stage we arrive early to nab a good spot for Amsterdam’s **PIP BLOM**. Furious drumming supports wry lyrics sung to upbeat melodies. Moshes happen organically and prove that they deserve to be stalwarts of the indie disco with tracks like ‘Ruby’ and ‘Daddy Issues’. Someone unimpressed on the way out calls them ‘derivative’ but they don’t sound much like anything else at the moment. Definitely ones to watch if you aren’t already.

Heaving heard lots of chat about **YONAKA** around the line-up boards we make a note to catch their set. Like many bands who choose hit caps-lock early in their career (absolute gems BROCKHAMPTON excluded) these guys have committed to being both overbearing and sincere, even on a sunny Friday afternoon. Back at the Market Stage **SPECTOR** are busy riding the indie revival train. They’ve got a few catchy songs but most of them blur into one as frontman Frederick Macpherson does his best Alex Turner/Justin Hayward-Young impression.

With a bit of spare time in our personal schedule, we wander around until the noise rumbling from the This Feeling tent captures our attention. Despite not being scheduled on the app punk-infused Glaswegians **CRYSTAL** are very much present, captivating the audience with their devilish blend of grunge and pop, replete with addictive hooks and sultry vocals. You’ve heard of right place, right time, well we’ve never felt it quite like stumbling across Crystal and immediately follow them on Spotify and are gifted with their new single a week later. **JUNK WHALE**, on the Virgins and Veterans stage, are yet again another Oxford band delight, rousing one of the happiest crowds of the weekend. Charming the audience with animated pop-punk that is set to dazzle, their cover of Lana del Rey’s ‘Video Games’ is a personal highlight of the weekend.

As afternoon turns to evening we settle in for **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING**, the thinking-man’s rave band. In lieu of a vocalist they use sound bites from archive footage, while their musical style sits somewhere between alt-rock and electronica. They’re smartly dressed as is their thing and are (in the nicest way possible) obviously massive music nerds, cycling through an impossibly large



Public Service Broadcasting



Junk Whale

roster of instruments from banjo to flugelhorn. Our only objection is that they speak at all. We say go the whole hog and leave all the talking to the old guys.

Itching with enthusiasm for Friday’s headliner, we throw our jittery energy back towards the Virgins and Veterans stage again to see the glistening lo-fi pop of **MAX BLANSJAAR**. Max lilts with a sincerity that brings the quiet euphoria of his twinkling arrangements to life, with his somewhat saccharine songs unspooling slowly out of his bedroom.

Walking back into the main area to grab some food before the headliners, we can’t avoid hearing some of **LEWIS CAPALDI**. Like the vegan paella we grab, he’s kind of bland but there’s nothing offensive in there. We’re just interested to see what happens as the final finger of the monkey’s paw comes curling down now he, George Ezra and Ed Sheeran all finally have their sordid wishes for fame fulfilled.

Pure white heat erupts from the Truck stage as Friday headliners **WOLF ALICE** arrive, setting the tone for the next hour with the gloriously grungy ‘Moaning Lisa Smile’. ‘Beautifully

Unconventional’ is the perfect description for the sound of Wolf Alice, who balance incensed punk with spectral ecstasy: hauntingly beautiful at times, but never far from the underscore of fury. Dipping between the uncensored rage heard in ‘Yuk Foo’ and the psychedelic wonder of the likes of ‘Planet Hunter’, Wolf Alice command the crowd with ease, flitting between these moods. Nothing is as simultaneously heart-warming and heart-breaking as a crowd screaming “Me and you were meant to be in love” in the delicately empowering ‘Don’t Delete the Kisses’, a coming-of-age love song that feels divinely ordained. It is hard to imagine a band of this capacity ever gracing the pits of the beer-stained O2 Academy Oxford only three years prior, a testament to their success.

SATURDAY

There are few certainties in life: death, taxes, and the inevitability of an ironic mosh pit whenever classical music is played at a festival. Saturday morning is no exception as **THE OXFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** rummage deep in the bag of school concert band favourites for Truck’s early risers, light classical pieces alongside hits from the Beatles, Queen and Bowie. Conductor Robert Max, one of the more



Wolf Alice



Max Blansjaar

charismatic frontmen to grace the Truck Stage this weekend, tells us that this is the ‘best karaoke backing band we’ll ever have’. He’s not wrong.

Hitting the Market Stage early are intense guitar band **HAZE**. The formerly-Oxford now Bristol-based quartet have a trace of the Libertines in them and a hint of Parquet Courts, but still manage to provide an original sound. Their lyrics are funny and incisive and people know their stuff well enough to sing along. What gives Haze a real edge are their bass-lines, hogging centre stage literally and in the mix. **GURR** keep the tempo up with some high-octane girl rock. Frontwoman duties are shared between Andrey Casablanca and Laura Lee, both giving it their all on vocals and guitar. Casablanca has a bit of a Björk thing going on and her voice is particularly strong, taking the lead on the band’s best received tracks. If the crowd seems reluctant for the first few songs, they definitely aren’t by the end. Casablanca and Lee tell us all to get dancing and we do.

We try to see **PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS** but the Nest is heaving and we leave the ultras to it while making a note to check them out at Ritual Union later in the year.

Back at the Market Stage, **ONLY THE POETS** ask to see “the biggest circle pit of this entire fucking festival,” which is extreme wishful thinking given that their songs don’t lend themselves to moshing in the slightest. We hear them do more crowd interaction than actual playing, including tiresome tangents about their social media presence. Turns out, the more talking a band does, the less their music has to say. Later, **SPORTS TEAM** walk out to ‘Let Me Entertain You’. Is this their Knebworth moment? With zero pleasantries and a whole lot of stage presence they kick off one of the best sets of the weekend. It’s rare for each of a band’s line up to have a discernable onstage persona, but these guys nail it. Frontman Alex Rice is wearing a repurposed Newcastle Utd football shirt made to look like a New Romantic blouse. He is intensely watchable, climbing all over the Market Stage’s scaffolding and launching himself into the crowd, but is by no means the only member rocking a strong look. On keys is an uncommunicative 90s tech start-up intern/member of *Nsync; on guitar is *Friends*’ Chandler Bing, circa series two. Their sound is huge and their status as a phenomenal live band is confirmed. Who knows what will happen when they drop their debut album.



Foals

TRUCK FESTIVAL *continued*

Over on the Truck stage **DON BROCO** bring a heavier, darker approach to alternative-rock. Pummelling their way through the set, they chart their musical fluctuations with metal, funk, 80s synths and guttural snarls from frontman Rob Damiani. Infectious and biting, Don Broco execute their set with merited bravado. The crowd in front of the Truck Stage reshuffles and it seems like everyone takes this half an hour to get wrecked; we aren't imagine how many warm cans of dark fruits have been consumed by the time **JOHNNY MARR** strikes his first pose. He plays the usual set of Smiths songs dotted between new stuff and a Depeche Mode cover. Marr's festival set might be honed to within an inch of its life, but it gets the job done. Tracks from this side of the century like 'Easy Money' are received better than usual, but for most fans nothing tops 'This Charming Man', a banger to span the ages. Two dads scream along while the kids on their shoulders bob about approvingly. A teenager, hugging his mates, says "I can die happy now I've heard that live." Nice.

Perhaps the post-Marr high marred (heh) our judgement, but we power

forward in the interim to position ourselves toward the front of the crowd for homecoming headliners **FOALS**. Delirious anticipation settles on the congregation like a thick fog, bringing out crowd-wide renditions of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and 'Chelsea Dagger', the camaraderie a comforting warm-up. Silence falls just moments before the first note of recent single 'On the Luna' plays, and in a split second a throng of thousands collectively lose their minds for what turns out to be the festival set of the century. Our feet don't touch the floor for the next hour and a half of swelling symphonies that tear through both early material ('Olympic Airways', 'Red Socks Pugie', 'Two Steps, Twice') and newer, fleshier pieces ('In Degrees', 'Exits'). Feverish, electric, an untouchable force of nature: Foals went into hibernation before their recent album 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost Part 1', and came back kicking. Back on home turf, the band are here to make the most of the occasion – and it is an occasion. Fondly recalling memories of their first Truck Festival spent playing in a barn, they thank their supporters for bringing them to this day, including a big shout out to *Nightshift*, but it is clear they

climbed there all on their own. It ends in a storm of confetti cannons, lights and smoke and the next day, we look up the word Triumph in a dictionary and there it is: a photo of Foals onstage at Truck.

SUNDAY

Sunday begins with the giddy garage-punk of **GAFFA TAPE SANDY** performing at The Nest. Prior to this set, 'Meat Head' was the only song of theirs known to us: a thrashing, angry message to those who violate consent. Excited to see what such a promising band could deliver, we're not disappointed. A set laden with circle pits that ooze freedom, fury, and community, Gaffa Tape Sandy churn out beautifully frenzied and frantic punk rock. We're baffled to learn that they would, two weeks later, headline the basement of The Library, having garnered such a large sea of fans today.

A quick dash – fortunately not too hard given the proximity of the stages at Truck – to the main stage and we're front and centre for **THE JAPANESE HOUSE**, a set that unfortunately derails due to frustrations with the sound engineering that isn't resolved. Despite gentle directions from project creator Amber Bain,

the vocals, reverb and guitars never balance at any point in the half an hour, making it easy to understand her visible frustration. Eventually tensions culminate with the set being cut short, much to the exasperation of both sides. Regardless of the complications, the songs performed showcase the futuristic daydream that Bain so expertly crafts, the woozy harmonies and soft synth textures floating across an enchanted crowd.

Having discovered two new (and sonically satisfying) bands in the This Feeling tent, we head back there once again, though we were not prepared for what we're about to witness. **YOUNG GARBO** can best be described as a punkier Madness, bringing with them a refreshing – albeit confusing – wave of originality when contrasted against the weekend. Led by vocalist (and stage comedian) Garyn Williams, the band chuck out an array of wry lyrics paired with groovy bass lines and feisty riffs. We leave the tent perplexed, with 'Baggy Trousers' somehow lodged in our brains, but in a good way.

Bringing unprecedented energy to the festival, we see the carnival-on-wheels from New Orleans **HOT 8 BRASS BAND** take the



Gaffa Tape Sandy



Kate Nash

Truck stage. Armed with a setlist featuring 'What's My Name? (Rock With the Hot 8)' and their rendition of 'Sexual Healing', the Hot 8 conjure dynamism that doesn't depend on audience participation, rather synchronises perfectly with it. Something Truck had been missing up until that point was much outside of the line-up of guitar, drums, singer. Loaded with trumpets, trombones, and a saxophone, the Hot 8 heat up the mid-afternoon with infectious rhythm. **CASSIA** are a similarly welcome change; as they mix African-inspired rhythms with upbeat and competing melodies passed between bass and lead guitar, it becomes obvious that they *love* Vampire Weekend. They make this influence their own though and the best parts of their set are the instrumental tangents where the drums take the lead. Less interesting moments come when their sound veers closer to that of The Kooks or Wombats. Still, Cassia are exciting and we hope they let themselves become a weird, sprawling Afro-beat inspired jam band. Sadly, capitalism might necessitate that they steer towards the more palatable tracks they end the set with.

Over at the Market Stage are **WHENYOUNG**, a band on the

verge of something good. Their songs are rousing, on the way towards anthemic at points, but elements of the mix are off-putting. Maybe they're having a bad sound day but Aoife Power's voice doesn't sit well with the rest of her band. She can really sing but they need something extra to bridge the gap between her soprano and the bassiness that backs her. Mixing the vibe up at the Market Stage are **EASY LIFE**, another act set apart on the line-up simply by being the only act of their type to play. They're of the Rex Orange County school; that is, white guys who rap and occasionally sing about not much at all. Their whole deal is very lo-fi and as the set bumbles along with mellow beats and good vibes, more and more people flock to the Market Stage until it begins to overflow. Their closer 'Pockets' is hugely popular and the crowd sing every word along with frontman Murray Matravers. They're fun for now, but are so painfully on trend that we can't help but wonder what they'll do when public favour curdles.

Weaving a narrative of crushes, insecurities and relationship breakdowns, we have the pleasure of witnessing singer-songwriter **DODIE** similarly attracting an



Johnny Marr

enormous crowd at the Market Stage. Softly spoken, vulnerable and often accompanied by a ukulele, Dodie can often be misunderstood as twee or saccharine. Yet this misses the point entirely: Dodie conveys earnest messages of love and heartbreak in a way that appeals to younger generations without any degree of performativity, a hard feat from someone who amassed the base of her following from her YouTube presence.

KATE NASH takes the Market stage by storm, adorned in what can best be described as a Villainelle dress. She quickly dispels any reservations about her place in contemporary music – most people will agree her content has piqued little interest since the Noughties MySpace era – by thrashing out banger after delectable banger. Another mention of Boris Johnson precedes her song 'Dickhead' and the crowd enjoy the sentiment greatly. The gloriously cathartic set ends on a euphoric high with noughties anthem 'Foundations', and we leave with the fond memory of yelling 'YOU SAID I MUST EAT SO MANY LEMONS/CAUSE I AM SO BITT-AH' at strangers.

Sunday's festival closing

headliners **TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB** have changed direction. Lead singer Alex Trimble is almost unrecognisable, sporting a shaved head, sideburns and turtleneck combo. The three-piece become five on stage, which makes sense given the feel of their new songs – all less frantic with meatier beats. You can feel the dance remixes coming. Trimble commands the stage, especially when he ditches the guitar; Two Door have always had a hint of camp about them but they've settled into it on this tour; everything feels playfully and knowingly choreographed. They're great headliners purely because they're not taking themselves seriously and if you'd written them off as a relic of a decade past, maybe it's time to reassess.

One firework display and one car-park queue later, Truck '19 is over. The sheer amount of bands packed in to Hill Farm is seriously impressive and we're walking away with loads of new music to explore. Truck manages to be a home to young families, underage drinkers, stag dos and old rockers without ever feeling confused. Here's to next year!

Words: Amy Barker and Amelia Gabaldoni



CANCER BATS / INCITE / CRAZY ARM / MSRY **O2 Academy**

We'll lead with some questions. How do they do it? How do MSRY manage to scream, smash and catapult themselves through an opening set like that without missing a beat – without letting the energy drop for a fragment of a second? How do they take a thinned-out crowd (they're the first of three supports) and unite them into a frantic army of headbangers, moshers and acolytes?

Kial Churcher in particular is relentless: leaping across the stage, bending double to roar into the microphone, running off to the merch area as though he's got too much dopamine in his system and needs an outlet. We're entranced. This beautiful, chaotic madness is just the first part of a beautiful, chaotic evening, and it's all over too soon. "They should have been headlining," someone mumbles conspiratorially to us as MSRY leave to the sound of our eardrums dripping blood.

Crazy Arm are apparently Plymouth's hardest rocking folk-punk band. They've never played Oxford; "Is there a reason?" some philosopher in the front row cries out. This stops frontman Darren Johns in his tracks and he blurts out some awkward excuses before getting back to his true comfort zone: genuinely virtuosic bluegrass playing. If you want to see a guitar played like it's a banjo, this guy's your man.

Incite are a bit drab by comparison. "We are Incite," growls Richie Cavallera, "and we play heavy ... fucking ... metal!" True to their word, they play some heavy fucking metal, reminding us every thirty seconds to "make some fucking noise!" and then depart, leaving Cancer Bats to fire up our spleens again.

And they don't disappoint. Fuck tearing your shirt off after two songs: Cancer Bats are efficient, and bassist Jaye R. Schwarzer never even bothers to put his on. After opener 'Gatekeeper', there's already so much sweat on Liam Cormier that it's flying off his head like rain as he furiously headbangs. It's impossible *not* to move to this kind of music: danceable hardcore, riff-driven and southern-tinged, like Drive-By Truckers got weaponised by the Canadian government. Between songs, they wax lyrical about Wednesdays and Oxford's kebabs; during the music, they have a habit of adding an extra beat to each bar, though it's unclear whether this is intentional or whether they, like us, just want it all to last longer. 'Space and Time'; 'Hail Destroyer'; 'Winterpeg': every song is a highlight. We're pretty sure we'll never get our full hearing back, but by the gods of hardcore it was worth it.

Tom Kingsley

THIS IS THE KIT / ROZI PLAIN

O2 Academy

Rozi Plain plays tonight with a band, or to be more precise, the band as sharing seems to be the theme of this tour. Drummer Jamie Whitby-Coles has a strong yet precise touch strongly reminiscent of Bruce Mitchell from The Durutti Column, complementing her wistful but hauntingly insistent songs. All this works together nicely, especially on her expected closing cover of Sun Ra's 'There is No Day', few people being bold enough to attempt such an audacious move.

Kate Stables has spent sixteen years steadily building a reputation as This Is The Kit, greatly aided by significant BBC DJ patronage and links with The National. Her take on modern folk with an almost medieval twist takes a path not a million miles away from Trembling Bells, though hers is a more understated and accessible approach. Rozi pops up again on bass and the five-piece band all seem to be intently engaged in highly complex fretwork.

Twenty minutes in Kate asks for suggestions to move things along from her "snoozy" setlist, leading to a spirited take on 'The Magic Spell'. Her twin sister Emily joins in with some extra vocals and the set settles into a pleasingly interactive affair, with the crowd helping her

choose what style to go with. The packed and entranced audience includes several very young kids, creating an untypical but welcome family vibe; a raft of new songs are more upbeat and complex than older material, but retaining her way with a catchy melody and a well constructed song. There's little surprise in learning she's lived in France for some time, as there's a distinct Gallic aspect to her look and the way some of the songs hark back to European early music.

Engaging though this all is it's telling that when she gives the crowd the choice of "stompy" or "wafty" they decisively shout for the former; the recent folk (in its broadest sense) resurgence may have been a reaction to an excess of electronics and sampling in pop music but Kate Stables may have drifted a touch too far in the opposite direction.

Art Lagun

POTTERY

The Jericho Tavern

Monday night in the middle of festival season and yet there's still a healthy throng crowded in front of the Jericho's compact stage for Canadian quintet Pottery's Oxford debut. They're the ones who'll be able to boast in months and years to come that they were here as everyone scrabbles for tickets to catch them at some far, far larger venue.

For now though, that throng are too busy moving and grooving and in some cases completely losing their shit as the band play what will certainly be one of the gigs of the year.

Huddled together around their laconically intense drummer, they're a buttoned-up but phenomenally fluid funk machine, reminding us of Foals' uptight and frantic earliest incarnation on similarly small stages. And off they go: a tightly-wound ball of post-punk dance pop, wiry twin guitars and organ playing merry hell over the grooves, krautrock dynamics and motorik energy making way for freewheeling funk workouts, chopped-up melodies, deceptively wide-ranging vocals from the singer with the 80s dress sense and Henry V haircut, peaking at the point they fly through what might be a molten fusion of Devo's Uncontrollable Urge' and The Velvet Underground's 'What Goes On', only punctuated by some Funkadelic diversions. And then onto what might be a 21st Century update on A Certain Ratio's 'Shack Up', even managing to drop things a notch or two to let the singer's voice show what it can do, sounding like Jello Biafra possessed by the spirit of The Associates' Billy MacKenzie.

By the time they've stuttered, spasmed and careered to a climactic finale, most people here are happy to catch their breath. This is a masterclass in live rock energy and chemistry. So you best start queuing now for the return visit.

Dale Kattuck

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SUPERNORMAL

Braziers Park

FRIDAY

We’ve attended our share of festivals, but Friday at Supernormal is the most delicate wristband application we’ve ever experienced; there’s also a nice programme for £1, “or whatever you’ve got.” Yes, once again, despite featuring acts that scream at us as vehemently as Wackford Squeers guest-hosting *Infowars*, and despite a queue to meet Satan in a caravan longer than that to meet Santa at Macy’s, Supernormal has proved itself to be the friendliest festival in existence. Staff are constantly helpful, even the gloriously stoned barman who finds the names of all the drinks unfeasibly hilarious, and we’re treated as welcome guests rather than walking wallets.

In return, as if to prove that decency engenders decency, the audiences are some of the most receptive we’ve been part of. **SARAH KENCHINGTON**’s bike-propelled instruments, including ping-pong ball bagatelle percussion and aquatuba, are received so rapturously she visibly blushes, even considering malfunctions (her set mostly sounds like a Wookiee in labour, which may or may not be the desired effect, but is quite an experience). The performances begin with a slightly sparser crowd for late additions **NAPE NECK**, whose mantric rants are no wave, but without the wave. We especially enjoy their bassist marching on the spot like they’re in an am-dram reading of Kipling’s *Boots*. Rather more refined, but still intermittently serrated, is **BUG PRENTICE**, featuring Ally Craig on vocals and guitar, and guest bassist Jenny from Lucy Leave. The music is often twitchy and angular, but the true glory is Ally’s voice: a wry crooning rasp, like warm wind through ironic pampas.

SEALIONWOMAN in the Barn brings forth waves of crepuscular jazz-folk, from just voice, double bass and all the reverb, finishing the set like Cocteau Twins at a funeral in a culvert, but it’s **HAQ 123** who bring our first visual treat. Despite two of their members being too young to get into most gigs with their ages combined, they play a sterling set of Sabbathly metal, enlivened by the presence of a fully berobed Death and some sort of rave Kermit. They then announce an official stage-diving section after the set has finished, a revolutionary step forward in gig efficiency only a genius could come up with; these kids will probably be billionaires by the time they’re 35 (or underwater, depending on which predictive model is correct).

SEXTON MING’S PORRIDGE VAN, an act even more baroquely stupid than their name, ups the ante by starting with a doom glove puppet show we christen *Punch & Jud0*))), and moving on to full inscrutable mumbling noise panto, but set of the day award goes to **GWENIFER RAYMOND**, who, in sitting on a stool, head down in concentration, has zero theatrical presence – unless you count hilariously swearing like a dyspeptic docker between numbers – but her beautiful tangles of guitar and banjo notes are stimulating enough on their own, conjuring images of Appalachian chase scenes and crazed blues arachnids spinning downhome Mandelbrot.

HENGE’s reverby stoner psych, with a whiff of classic longform rock as hinted by a Neil Young t-shirt, are probably the band most in the Supernormal wheelhouse, and are strong, with bonus points for an unexpected shakuhachi solo, and the singer’s white powdered face, instigating a game of Ghost Or Baker? File them with Norwegians **MoE** who turn in a dirty chunky set we originally think of as *amphetamine doom*, before realising that’s just rock music – not everything needs a new genre name, even at Supernormal. However, we’re not sure what to call **MARK VERNON**’s melancholy collage of old cassette messages and ambient tones, something like an 80s Scanner who could only pick up conversations by stealing answer machines and dictaphone tapes. He also adds some eerie Sea Devils dictats by talking whilst deflating a balloon into his mouth. **RASHAD BECKER**’s woozy techno sounds like a drum machine on a choppy ferry crossing, and **ZAD KOKAR** has a vocalist like a tantrum toddler Jack Goldstein, and both are good, but the night ends with two powerful sets. **LIA MICE** in the Vortex, a sort of driftwood chapel perfect for immersive performances, proffers supple electro, abetted by a *Space: 1999* extra whacking what looks like a neon road sign and sounds like electric church bells falling down a synth well. New Jersey’s **DÁLEK** close the main stage; underneath an industrial crust, their take on hip hop is surprisingly old-school, tightly wound but simple raps over kicking rectilinear beats. And that is more than enough.

SATURDAY

As we enter the site on Saturday, a druidic figure invites us to “come into the centre of the spider.” Nah, you’re alright. Nothing good is likely



to come from that invitation, surely. Said spider is actually a vast wooden Louise Bourgeois affair, which is ritually paraded around the field on Sunday. Thankfully the first act is inviting in a more winning manner. **JACKEN ELSWYTH**’s set of banjo tunes and pedal-controlled shruti drones is simply lovely. Although they share some stylistic space with Gwennifer Raymond, there is none of her mercurial grace, just simple, limpid melodies played without a fraction of ego. There’s no grandstanding, no tricks, and no criticism we can make of their charming, hypnotic set.

Most things at Supernormal are alternative in some fashion, but occasionally they’re just alternative to “any good”. We get very little from **STANFELD**, a generic punk act only singled out by how badly they play (“They sounded better in soundcheck,” confides a volunteer, “mind you, they played one at a time then”), but they are followed by **NO HOME**, a solo punk whose songs sound at first like fragments of grunge demos, but whose steely, bellicose intensity is spell-binding. Back in the Barn, where things tend to be more sedate, **COPPER COIMS**, a duo of duos, is making a chthonic clatter, all echoing rhythms and distant, reverbed tones, like far-off rolling stock. If hell is a tube train that

never arrives, then Lucifer is the son of Mornington Crescent.

People say Steve Davis is boring. Oh, and that’s a bad myth. Whilst his snooker peers make us think of pub carveries and *The Sunday Express*, Steve thought (pot the red and) screw that, became a respected prog DJ, and played synth in **THE UTOPIA STRONG**, a trio featuring Monsoon Bassoon and Cardiacs guitarist Kavus Torabi. Even if you don’t admire Davis’ influence on the modern safety game, you can admire this set, which makes nods to early Tangerine Dream and Labradford’s stately drifting. On the main stage, **MESANGE** impress with their portentous Current 93 pronouncements and violin drone euphoria, making a far bigger impact than when they supported Pigs x7 at the Bully recently. **HEN OGLED**, who follow them, are a less streamlined proposition, a harped maximal pop band who, at their best sound like Prince played by Bis, or a striplit chipmunk chart act, but who are sometimes annoyingly scrappy. By contrast, the Netherlands’ **LIFELESS PAST** are honed and varnished, a tight syn-drum and guitar duo in thrall to The Cure and Joy Division, who succeed in being the right band at the right time, and energise our flagging old limbs.

Comedian John Finnemore has a



sketch about football commentators applying national stereotypes to all the players, observing how often we hear of a “clinical German defence” or an “exuberant Brazilian striker”. With this caveat in mind, we still feel that Japanese psychedelic bands who make it to the UK tend to be masters of the slow, steady build, and **QUJAKU**’s monumental set is no exception. They start subtly, with sax like 808 State’s ‘Pacific’ over scowling rock, before tumescing slowly over 40 minutes until someone is twatting what might be a satellite dish to pounding, cloud-seeking rhythms, and the sound becomes nebula-huge and swallows us all.

Having been amazed by Giant Swan at a previous festival, we have to check out **MUN SING**, one of their number playing hobbled techno. His jerky moves in veiled headgear make him look like an apiarist mummy, but the music is glorious. Like much of Autechre, no matter how abstract it threatens to get, there’s an electro groove kicking things forward. Speaking of kicking things forward, **PETBRICK**’s double-pedalled bass drum must have a concrete block in front to stop it sliding. There are electric hums and spin cycle rhythms in there, but the drumming is improbably brilliant – we’re standing far too near the kit to hear a balanced sound, but can’t bear to move.

Sepultura alumnus Iggor Cavalera is a beast on the skins, yet no matter how punishing the beats become, there’s a secret swing to the rhythms. Maybe that’s his Brazilian heritage (leave it, Finnemore). Tracks could develop further, but that’s like complaining a boulder doesn’t have enough corners. Just admire the boulder. Even if it just falls on you. After that **COCAINE PISS** are a mild let-down, a sneery NY punk clatter with Melt Banana yelps which would sound fine in The Library, but seems a bit thin for a headline set (not to mention short). We prefer **VRIDIAN**’s improvised set, with warm woodwind and projected slides of dried insects, perhaps in homage to the spider looking over the field.

SUNDAY

The final day starts quietly, with **DAVID BRAMWELL**’s *The Cult Of Water*, a magical realist lecture, in which a time-travelling pedestrian touches on psychogeography, etymology and riparian religions. Bramwell is the creator of The Odditorium, seen locally at Wilderness and Irregular Folks, though after a day at Braziers, he may need to recalibrate the first syllable.

In the Barn Sarah Angliss’s **AIR LOOM** is possibly the highlight of



Sunday, redolent of vintage horror soundtracks with tiny bells, theremin, electronics and some sort of keyboard dulcimer or micro-spinet, and Sarah Gabriel’s glorious soprano. There’s a folk element to the vocals, but an arch concert hall distance to them too – ideal for anyone who wishes *The Wicker Man* soundtrack had more Schoenberg. And then there’s a drum solo over a recording of a building being demolished, which criticises our new PM, and a wistful song about the moon. Perfect.

Not many could follow that, but **JOHN BUTCHER** is amongst the few. This solo set finds him visiting every space in, and outside, the Barn, faultlessly imitating, in turn, the birds that live there, a bubbling alembic, and tapes rewinding, before exploring feedback without going anywhere near the mouthpiece. Extended technique on its own is only diverting, but with a true musical sense it can be joyous.

Oxford’s **BASIC DICKS** welcome us back to the main stage, their hardcore downpour swift but invigorating. “I Am Man, Hear Me Bore” is a standout, though with that in mind we should perhaps not elaborate. One final trip to BEEF is required to cool off, where **Bell Lungs** gift us with Broadcast-style dream

pop, concluding with a wonderful number that’s like an incursion on an Irish wake by someone fixing bad transistor radio wiring. They are followed by an unexpected encounter between a tap dancer and a sewing machine, not a collaboration between Comte de Lautréamont and Lionel Blair, but **TAP SEW** (someone please book them for Tap Social, just for the euphony). The close-miked Singer in the band chugs as expected, but sounds are also sourced from apertures being opened and threads being plucked, whilst the tap shoes are used, not so much for dancing as pawing and scraping the floor, like a lackadaisical toro. Together they make fascinating chitinous rhythms unlikely to be found in any other festival field this summer.

Newcomers to Supernormal are often gleefully astonished by what they find, and the old regulars are always welcoming. There’s no better example than our last act, Italian prog-skronk rockers **ZU**. Halfway through their set the drummer stands up and shouts exultantly, “This festival is fucking freaking weird!” The crowd returns a vast cheer, and the math-honk headbanging begins afresh. We’re already looking forward to Supernormal 2020: set the controls for the heart of the spider.

David Murphy

All photos by Sam Shepherd

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TRACKS

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TOP TRACKS

ACRITARCH

Acritarch is the solo work of someone called Brooke, who informs us the project was “a way to vent/express the things in my head due to severe clinical depression.” No fun to endure but the end result is a mostly enjoyable ride through the flaming wastelands of his psyche, since instead of mopey acoustic mithering Brooke took the industrial metal route to salvation, so we get start-to-finish, non-stop pummelling, grinding, growling, and general sulphurous exorcising of demons. The vocals are a bit cartoonishly opulent at times, like an amateur operatic society’s attempt to portray “Satan’s Entry Into the Realm of Men” but elsewhere magnificently brutish and musically it’s a suitably brutal S&M session that leaves few death/black/industrial clichés unturned but revels in their entertaining mindlessness across tracks with titles like ‘A Wound That Never Heals’, ‘The Dark That Stains Us All’ and, ‘Vengeful Eye’. Every time you feel Brooke has ramped the Total Damnation switch up to max, he turns it another notch, blast beats underpinning yet another shredded crescendo. While much of this sounds epic to the point of symphonic, his best moment comes on the aptly-titled ‘Punishment’, where he veers properly into industrial noise, cranks out some dirty Godflesh-like grind and from there descends fully into musical hell, his voice glitching as his demon army batters everything within reach like the galley slave rhythms of Hell’s own longship. We hope Brooke is now fully on the road to recovery and wish him continued good health, but hope it doesn’t mean the end to such ferocious musical outpourings. These dark, uncertain times require a suitably bleak soundtrack.

APHRA TAYLOR

Emotive self-examination of a very different hue from Aphra Taylor here, the singer already championed by Ride’s Andy Bell on his Boogaloo Radio show. On the face of it it’s standard girl-and-guitar stuff (with just the barest electronic back-up at times), but Aphra has a sleepy-eyed, mellifluous voice that allows her gentle ruminations to sparkle, with a folkie edge on ‘Sixteen’, while her picking rouses the simple, rustic melody to life. ‘Red’ strips

Track of the Month wins a free remix from Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift

things back further, just sparse acoustic and heart-on-sleeve vocals but the slightest catch in her voice when she solemnly sings “I want to go back to those days” brings a sense of romantic longing to the song and lifts it a level, though ‘Distortion’ is probably the best song here, all midnight blue dreaminess that reminds us a little of fellow local singer Dolly Mavies with its simplicity and limpid vocal performance. A soothing balm after the scabrous sonic storm of Acritarch’s offering.

COWLEY CHAINSAWS

“The main difference between this and our last release is that instead of consuming almost a whole bottle of whiskey I was drinking pints of gin and tonic, because I have matured as an artist.” So says Cowley Chainsaws vocalist Stephen Tuohy by way of introduction to this latest (and, we believe, last) recording by East Oxford noise merchants Cowley Chainsaws, before adding, “Jimmy (Hetherington, producer) will tell you that I am the drunkest person he’s ever recorded vocals for. Do not believe this. Jimmy was drinking the pints with me and thus his judgment can’t be trusted.” The last release Stephen is referring to us was a demo that found the ramshackle, rabble-rousing rock rioters compared to “broken things and the sound of a flight of stairs falling down another flight of stairs,” and we’re happy to report that not a huge amount has changed on that front. This is seriously lo-fi, frantic stuff that sounds less like a bootleg of an old anarcho-punk gig as a bootleg of a stage invasion and rousing drunken singalong at the end of an anarcho-punk gig, possibly featuring Wattie from The Exploited and Colin Jerwood from Conflict engaged in a shouty mating ritual while Art Phag, GBH and Discharge fall apart noisily in the background. Not only is it far more fun than any of the sensible rock bands elsewhere in this month’s pile, it’s a perfect musical backdrop to a no-deal Brexit. The soundtrack to broken things indeed.

ARTHUR OSOFSKY

With his band The Overload seemingly on hold, or in the process of an internal rebuild, frontman Arthur Osofsky teams up with Fred Bail, aka DJ Xodos of K-Funkx for a tripped-out remodelling of one of his poems. We hesitate to call Arthur a singer since even in Overload mode he’s more of a performance poet, reeling off yobbishly caustic lines like John Cooper

Clarke infused with the lairy bile of Shaun Ryder. Here his astringent stream-of-consciousness is put through the glitch-house mangler, stretched and layered in woozy tripped-out effects so the end result, as he repeats “Satellites and broadband”, is something like a malfunctioning *Blue Jam* sketch involving Ian Dury and a bag of Clarky Caps (he even mentions cake at one point). It’s oddly hypnotic and evidence that whatever form his performance path might take, Arthur definitely has a future on stage.

TOM LOAKE

As deep fake videos, artificial intelligence and cyber warfare become increasingly complex and reality blurs into *The Matrix*, we struggle to work out what’s real, what’s human, what’s a cyber construct and what’s just a (usually bad) dream. Take this offering from Tom Loake for instance. There’s some big electronic beats, some soulful blues guitars, a veritable tanker load of “Woah-oh” backing vocals and some earnest, slightly lovelorn singing that might be a neural network’s attempt to emulate the growing army of Rag’n’Bone Man/Jack Savoretti/Tom Walker types that have already taken control of *Later... with Jools Holland* and much of daytime radio and might well be coming for your children even as you read this. Or maybe this is what the human pop condition has become: a scoured and polished green screen onto which interchangeable images can be projected. Maybe it’s the machines that actually have the upper hand in music making now and if we just leave it to Cyberdyne Industry’s logarithms we’ll get wall-to-wall industrial techno bangers from now til Christmas instead of third-rate blues-rock knock-offs by earnest young white guys with oversized beards and hats. In which case, let the machine apocalypse commence.

FLINTLOCK RIFLES

That said, maybe all of us are just pixellated digital drones in some vast computer programme that’s been set to run in ever decreasing circles until all rough edges have been smoothed off, any kind of wild fluctuation or deviance from the straight and narrow has been erased and pop finally eats itself. On the surface Flintlock Rifles’ one-track offering, ‘Wicked Mary’, is pretty standard brash rock fare, with moon-in-June rhyming (Mary / Scary; Telly / Ordinary), and has a bit of energy and vim about it but it’s so byrote you begin to imagine it was knocked out by uncaring technology in an idle five minutes. It’s fuzzy but not heavy; frantic

without being fast; rock and roll without seeming to possess much of a spark of rebel spirit. It’s palatable but simultaneously lacking in taste or real substance: two and a half minutes of “something that just happens to be there” – a supermarket ready meal of a rock song. And the title bothers us because it reminds us of lost (for good reason) Noughties Manc rockers Proud Mary, once signed to Noel Gallagher’s Sour Mash label and, it seems (checks Wikipedia), still going. Which begs the question: if no-one cared back then and even fewer people are bothered almost two decades later, does the band actually exist? Sorry Flintlock Rifles, got a bit distracted there, went off on one somewhat, but you only have yourselves to blame.

TOILET TRACKS

FULL CIRCLE BLUE

Full Circle Blue, bless ‘em, are back for more after a review back in January that said their self-described “easy listen blues” (sic) should have been run over by a bus. Having not bleated or raged about it, at least publically, we’re loathe to heap another mountain of critical carnage on them but this is truly, appallingly wretched. ‘Lonely Tribe’ all by itself furnishes us with enough rhyming couplets to keep us in insults til gone Christmas. Try these ones on for size: “Live with care / Don’t slip into a state of despair”; “Where’s your place / In the human race”; “Is our warfare / Beyond repair?”, and “Have you found your place / In the human race / Got to live with no disgrace.” In the poetry stakes they make Liam Gallagher read like Simon Armitage, (and given the band’s biog suggests one of them is a professional poet, we hope to God it’s not him writing this stuff) while their brand of easy, vaguely reggae-inflected soft blues rock is so lacking in soul, spirit or urgency they make Sting’s ‘The Dream of the Blue Turtles’ sound like Anaal Nathrakh’s ‘Codex Necro’. Off it noodles, laborious and passionless, utterly featureless beyond a slightly simpering, mildly pained expression on its oddly inhuman face. Somehow this actually goes beyond musical anonymity and into something almost evil: a musical vacuum that quietly and surreptitiously sucks all the good, fun stuff from the room, leaving nothing but a desiccated husk. From apocalyptic industrial metal carnage to the blandest thing that ever existed, in one small pile of demos. It’s been quite a journey, and depending on which way round you made it, it’s been either a joyous road to salvation, or a downward descent that makes your average Cormac McCarthy novel seem like an episode of *In the Night Garden*.

Send tracks for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact phone number. If you can’t handle criticism, please don’t send us your demo. Same goes for your stupid, over-sensitive mates.

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Peace

+ CC Honeymoon

Fri 23rd Aug • 10.30pm

Dancehall artists Teejay and Ding Dong Live

Sun 25th Aug

Little Steven & The Disciples Of Soul

Fri 30th Aug

Palmist

+ Be Still + Flintlock Rifles + Redshift

Fri 6th Sep • 6.30pm

Ultimate Coldplay

+ Port in a Storm + Rhys Warriner

Sat 7th Sep • 6.30pm

No Hot Ashes

+ Sad Boys Club

Sat 14th Sep • 10pm

Welcome to Oxford ft. Patrick Nazemi

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Boyzlife

+ Katie Kittermaster

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Foreign Beggars

+ Rhymeskeemz + DeSide + Dr Erbz

Tue 24th Sep

New Hope Club

Thur 26th Sep

Submotion Orchestra

+ So So Sun + Tilly Valentine

Fri 27th Sep • 6.30pm

Bingo Lingo Freshers Special

Fri 27th Sep • 11pm

Silent Disco Oxford

Sat 28th Sep • 6.30pm

Evil Scarecrow

+ The Grand Mal + Damaged Reich + Imminent Annihilation

Mon 30th Sep

The Night Café

+ Dreamers + On Video

Thur 3rd Oct

Pierce Brothers

+ Millington

Fri 4th Oct • 6.30pm

CoCo and The Butterfields

+ Harry Pane

Fri 4th Oct • 11pm

The Oxford Soul Train

Sat 5th Oct • 10pm

Psychedelic Carnival

Sun 6th Oct

Richard Hawley

Sun 6th Oct

Red Rum Club

Tue 8th Oct

Easy Life

Fri 11th Oct 6.30pm

The London African Gospel Choir performs Paul Simon's Graceland

Fri 11th Oct • 6.30pm

King Prawn

+ Popes of Chillitown

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

Antarctic Monkeys

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm • SOLD OUT

The Divine Comedy

Mon 14th Oct

Kate Tempest

Wed 16th Oct • 6.30pm

PRESS TO MECO

+ Chapter and Verse

Thur 17th Oct • SOLD OUT

Ninja Sex Party

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Amber Run

+ Stereo Honey

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Ferocious Dog

Fri 18th Oct • 11pm

The Abba Party Live Tribute

Sat 19th Oct • 12pm

Ritual Union

Tue 22nd Oct

Barns Courtney

Tue 22nd Oct

Striking Matches

+ Tenille Townes

Wed 23rd Oct 6.30pm

The Fallen State

Thur 24th Oct

Headie One

Fri 25th Oct • 6.30pm

Jake Clemons

+ Ben McKelvey

Sat 26th Oct • 4pm

Oxtoberfest

Sat 26th Oct • 6.30pm

Guns 2 Roses

+ MOTLEY CRUE

Mon 28th Oct

Inglorious

Sat 2nd Nov • 6pm

Hip Hop Hooray

Sat 2nd Nov • 6.30pm

The Dualers

+ Kioko

+ Count Skylarkin

+ Tony Nanton

Sat 2nd Nov • 11pm

Mad Cobra

Sun 3rd Nov

Bear's Den

Mon 4th Nov

Feeder

Tue 5th Nov

Hang Massive

Tue 5th Nov

Reel Big Fish

+ [spunge] + Lightyear

Thur 7th Nov

Deaf Havana

Thur 7th Nov

Little Comets

Fri 8th Nov • 9pm

The Roaring 2.0s

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Dr Syntax & Pete Cannon

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Snarky Puppy

Mon 11th Nov

Elder Island

Tue 12th Nov

Yonaka

Thur 14th Nov

The Smyths...

A celebration of the debut L.P

Fri 15th Nov • 6.30pm

The Treatment

+ Airrace + Lake Acacia

Sat 16th Nov • 6.30pm

Dub Pistols

Sat 16th Nov • 6.30pm

Professor Green

Sat 16th Nov • 11pm

King Shine Vs Empire

Sun 17th Nov

Black Water County

Mon 18th Nov

Scouting for Girls

Tue 19th Nov

Primal Scream

Thur 21st Nov

A

+ '68 + False Heads

Fri 22nd Nov • 6.30pm

Half Man Half Biscuit

Fri 22nd Nov • 11pm

The Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club

Sat 23rd Nov • 6.30pm

Biffy McClyro (Tribute)

Tue 26th Nov • SOLD OUT

Fontaines D.C.

Wed 27th Nov • 6.30pm

Electric Six

Thur 28th Nov

Happy Mondays - Greatest Hits Tour

+ Jon Dasilva

Thur 28th Nov

Rhys Lewis

Fri 29th Nov • 6.30pm

Mad Dog Mcrea

Sat 30th Nov • 6.30pm

Airbourne

+ Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown

Sat 30th Nov • 6.30pm

Definitely Mightbe (Oasis tribute)

Sun 1st Dec

The Chats

Thur 5th Dec

Carols at the O2 Academy Oxford

Fri 6th Dec • 6.30pm

Pearl Jam UK

Fri 6th Dec • 6.30pm

Gentleman's Dub Club

Sat 7th Dec • 6.30pm

Absolute Bowie

- Legacy Tour

Sat 14th Dec • 6.30pm

Little Simz

Sun 15th Dec

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Fri 13th Mar 2020

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Fri 11th Sep 2020 • 6.30pm

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